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COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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*The Process of
Communication*

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OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will introduce you to some basic concepts in communication, its importance in business organizations, different types of communication, different modes to be used, and their comparative advantages and disadvantages. We shall also give you insights into strategies that are used for effective face-to-face communication.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

We all engage in communication with others right from our birth. When we interact with others we are communicating with them. Right now I am communicating with you through this unit and while you are reading it you, too, are in fact communicating with me through this text. It is often said that we live in an age of communication characterized by speed, efficiency, and the ability to transcend physical or geographical limitations. But what does it mean to communicate? The dictionary definition is 'to exchange (thoughts) or make known (information or feelings) by speech, writing or other means, to transmit'. Communication is more than just messaging or swapping information. It involves not just words, but the use of all our senses. With face-to-face dialogue, our facial expression, tone, body language, ability to listen with patience, all contribute to the conveying of messages and information between people.

For example, the written word, whether in books and magazines, e-mails or texts can convey more than just the writing. It can inspire, elevate and encourage if that is the intention of the writer. It can also confuse and exasperate if we are not careful! Lynne Truss, in a recent book on punctuation, pointed out how easily the meaning of the written word can be altered just by rearranging the punctuation. She invites us to compare the following two sentences; 'A woman, without her man, is nothing', and 'A woman: without her, man is nothing'! As human beings we have the ability to express ourselves and share our thoughts and feelings in many ways. We could live in isolation, never communicating with another person, but that would not create value. We can keep feelings to ourselves or we can share them. Each person has his or her unique view of things, and each perspective is valuable. Through sharing these individual ideas or views with each other,

Communication skills global solutions may be found. Someone may share an idea that the other person may not have even considered. These differing views could be compared to a jigsaw puzzle, where each person has their own piece, and when the pieces fit together, the full picture emerges and a solution is found that may not have been considered previously. Certainly increased communication that uses technology can be enormously valuable. Being able to share information quickly between people has meant that a disaster in one part of the world can be responded to in another; it has led to the fall of corrupt governments, as people have been able to unite in challenging authoritarian regimes. People in remote areas fighting injustice have linked up with people on the other side of the world who can support their cause. As with everything, new technologies such as e-mail and text messaging have the potential to be positive or negative.

Notes

THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

The following figure gives a simple model of the process of communication:-

Elements of Communication

If we look at the figure given above we can derive the elements of communication as follows:

1. Communication involves at least two persons (a) The addresser and (b) the addressee.
2. The topic: the contents of the message.
3. The channel: the medium through which the message travels, e.g. letter, telephone, e-mail, etc.
4. The code: the language of the message e.g. English, French, Hindi, etc.
5. The message form: the selection of particular grammar and lexical choices of the message.
6. The setting: the social and physical setting.

The Role of the Decoder

The process of decoding by the addressee is not passive as some people think. His/her role is an active one. Language, it is said, does not have meaning; it has potential for meaning and it is the decoder who is actively engaged in making meaning on the basis of his/her background knowledge and the context of communication e.g. the knowledge of the subject, topic, addresser addressee relationship, knowledge of the code, the physical and social context, etc.

Let us consider the following utterance:

“Mr. Gupta is not coming”.

The textual meaning of the sentence is not difficult; it is quite clear-but do we know what the speaker wants to convey? Is it a statement for our information? Is it a warning for the hearer? We can understand this text only if we know what the context is, i.e. who is the addresser; whom is s/he addressing; when, where and in what context. Suppose the addresser is the Managing Director (MD) of a company; and the addressee is his Secretary; the MD utters these words on arriving in his office and going through a fax message; Mr. Gupta is a consultant with the foreign collaborators of the company; and he was due to arrive that day for a meeting with the MD and other officials of the company. If we possess this background knowledge, we will be able to understand the meaning of the sentence uttered by the

MD. This sentence can now be called an utterance in this context. The secretary can interpret the utterance to mean: 'The meeting will have to be cancelled and the officials informed accordingly. Arrangements such as sending the car to the airport, hotel reservation, etc., if any, made for Mr. Gupta, will have to be cancelled', etc. etc.

When we make an utterance we always do something; we use language to perform some function, e.g. to inform, warn, promise, persuade, etc. and the hearer or the reader can derive the meaning of the utterance only through actively processing the utterance in the context in which it is made.

Macro Functions of Communication

The macro functions of communication are listed below:

1. **The emotive function:** to communicate the inner states and emotions, e.g. Oh no!
2. **The directive function:** seeking to affect the behaviour of others, e.g. close the door, please.
3. **The phatic function:** opening the channel or checking that it is working, e.g. hello, is it Thomas Cook? Or can you hear me, Mrs. Gupta?
4. **The poetic function:** the particular form chosen is the essence of the message. This refers to the aesthetic function of language.
5. **The referential function:** to carry information.
6. **The metalinguistic function:** focusing attention on the code itself, e.g. 'the use of both will or shall is correct in modern usage.'
7. **The contextual function:** creating a particular kind of context, e.g. Right! Let's start the meeting now.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

It is said that communication can never be hundred per cent complete. Many factors are involved in the process of communication and something can always go wrong with one or more of these. From your own experience, make a list of some of the factors that can impede communication. Let us now consider some of these barriers:

- a. **Code**, i.e. the addresser and the addressee may not share the same language between them. The addresser is speaking in French and the addressee does not know French.
- b. **Vocabulary**: The market declined under persistent bear hammering. One who is not familiar with the vocabulary of the stock market may not understand what is meant.
- c. **Concept**: Technical and subject specific concepts may not be understood by all. For example, a black hole is simple language, yet the concept may not be understood by many.
- d. Background knowledge and shared assumptions e.g. a Victorian style mansion may not be understood by those living outside England.
- e. Pronunciation, intonation, accent and stress in spoken language. Sometimes may not be understood.
- f. Culture specific communication may cause misunderstanding.
- g. Physical environment: Noise and other environmental disturbances or even physical distance between the addresser and the addressee can impede effective communication.
- h. Affective factors: personal factors e.g. anxiety, fear, attitude, motivation, beliefs, values, lack of mutual trust, lack of time or pressure of work, lack of attention, and personal rivalries. All these factors impede communication.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication may be classified into several categories on the following bases:-

- Expression: Written, oral and gestural
- Flow: Internal (Vertical & Horizontal) and external
- Relationship : Formal and informal

Various Media of Expression (Written, Oral & Gestural)

Communication can be achieved through various media, such as writing, speech, gestures and actions. One can use written words or draw pictures or one can use speech sounds. Speech is primary, writing secondary, that is, speech came first and the writing system was developed later on. There may still be some languages which are spoken but not written. In fact, several of the tribal languages do not have any script. Deaf and dumb people use actions and gestures in order to communicate with each other—this is also a form of communication, but they can communicate with ordinary people only by using commonly understood actions and gestures e.g. asking for water by cupping your hand near your mouth.

In business, communicating in writing is the most popular form of communication. It can take various forms such as letters, circulars, office memorandums, telegrams, fax messages, newsletter, brochures, bulletins, reports, manuals, house journals, magazines, etc. You are already familiar with some of these. This does not mean that oral communication is not used in business transactions. Speech is also used and quite often. It takes the form of face-to-face interaction, telephone conversations, lectures and talks, meetings and discussions, etc.

Expression through body language is known as gestural communication. Who is not familiar with the nodding of the head from side to side to say 'no' or up and down to convey 'yes'? Parents often use this means of communication with their children if they tend to be naughty in the presence of guests and it is often used in business situations as well in similar circumstances or when verbal communication is impossible e.g. in the factory where the noise of machinery makes verbal communication difficult.

Pictures, charts, diagrams are also used either on their own or in combination with written or oral communication for greater effect and better understanding. Business houses make use of them in their illustrated catalogues and brochures meant to promote their product.

Downward, Upward & Horizontal Communication

Companies have to communicate with outside agencies and other companies, government and private bodies, newspapers, advertisers, manufacturers of machinery, builders, suppliers of goods and services, clients and customers, etc. But there is also the need to communicate within the company itself, e.g. communication between a superior and a subordinate, i.e. from higher to lower levels of authority. This is an example of downward communication. There are also occasions when communication flows from a subordinate or subordinates to a higher authority. It may be a report, suggestion, opinion or a charter of demands

from the workers. We call this upward communication. Both these are forms of vertical communication.

Communication between officers working at the same level of management is called horizontal or lateral communication e.g. interaction between manager (Production) and Manager (Marketing). It involves exchange of ideas, information, opinions or seeking clarifications, etc. between personnel of the same rank.

Formal & Informal Communication

In business, these two terms are used in a slightly different sense than what we generally understand by them. Communication done through the chain of command is known as formal communication. It involves the transmission of official message in the formal organization structure. Such communication is planned and established by management and clearly indicates the authority relationships involved and these generally are in writing e.g. orders, decisions, instructions, etc.

Informal communication does not flow through the official channels of communication. It involves the spontaneous expression of reactions and ideas and is usually done orally. Hence it may carry incomplete or incorrect information.

The words formal and informal are also used to indicate change in form and language of communication according to change in relationship between the addresser and the addressee and the context of situation. For example, you will use informal language while talking to your brother at home. But if your brother also happens to be your boss in office and a formal meeting is going on in office, you will address him in a different way, i.e. in formal style.

WRITTEN VS. ORAL COMMUNICATION

When we speak of language as a tool for communication, we mean both spoken and written forms of the language. Both these modes can be used for communication. While they perform the same functions, their form and manner of use differ in many respects. For example, one makes use of sounds, other of symbols. The speaker has available to him/her the full range of voice quality effects, as well as facial expressions, postural and gestural systems, but these paralinguistic features are denied to the writer. The writer, on the other hand, has typographical variety at his/her disposal. The speaker is face-to-face with hearer while the writer writes for an absent reader who may also be far away in space and time.

These different features have their own advantages and disadvantages. In oral communication the speaker, being face-to-face with the hearer can monitor and match the reactions of the hearer. At the same time s/he can simultaneously plan his/her next utterance and fit it in the overall pattern of what s/he wants to say. S/he must keep on talking during the period allotted to him/her; s/he must decide when to take his/her turn, how to interrupt his/her interlocutor, how to hand over the turn--in fact s/he must be in command of all the conversational skills. S/he has certain advantages as well; s/he can observe his/her interlocutor and, if necessary, modify what s/he is saying. Oral communication is quicker, more economical and more effective than written communication. Doubts and misunderstandings can be cleared on the spot as immediate reaction and response is available.

But it has certain disadvantages also. There are variations in spoken language and also in the way it is delivered. These could be on account of

Communication skills	geographical or social and cultural differences. There are dialectical differences, accent differences and also differences in the use of paralinguistic features and body language. Speech is less organized than written language; it contains many incomplete sentences; often it contains simply sequences of phrases. These features may easily create misunderstandings. Oral communication is less reliable because it is not available in future; it is also affected by the attitudes and personality, self-interest, beliefs, values and prejudices of the sender as well as the receiver and also the time and circumstances of the communication. Oral communication is also not suitable for lengthy messages to be communicated to distant and widely scattered people.
Notes	<p>Similarly the written mode gives the writer certain advantages as well as disadvantages over the speaker. Since the writer is writing for an absent reader, s/he may look over, reflect, and edit what s/he has already written, with no fear of being interrupted by his/her interlocutor; s/he can take his/her own time in choosing a particular word, even looking it up in the dictionary, if necessary, reorder what s/he has written, and even change his/her mind about what s/he has to say. S/he is under no pressure to keep on writing; she can even destroy what s/he has written and throw it into the dustbin without fear of offending the reader. But the writer has disadvantages too: s/he has no access to immediate feedback and simply has to imagine the reader's reactions. This nonreciprocal nature of written communication makes it more difficult to learn.</p> <p>Written communication ensures the transmission of information in a uniform manner and there is little risk of unauthorized alteration in the message. Since it is put in black and white, it provides a permanent record for future reference. Written communication tends to be complete, precise and unambiguous. The message can be repeated at regular intervals and lengthy messages can be sent to widely scattered readers. But written communication is time-consuming, expensive and rigid and it becomes difficult to maintain secrecy.</p> <p>In the business world, face-to-face and telephone communications are generally confirmed in writing by post or e-mail, particularly when the communication is with the world outside. Why do you think is it necessary to do so? Discuss with others in your Study Centre the comparative advantages and disadvantages of the telephone mode of communication over face-to-face interaction.</p>

DIFFERENT TYPES OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS

Brown & Yule (1983) use two terms to describe the major functions of language. The function of language where the transfer of information is involved is called transactional, and that function involved in expressing social relations and personal attitudes is called Interactional.

(1) (a) A: There's no message for you (Transactional)

B: OK.

(b) A: How are you? (Interactional)

B: Fine, thank you.

In the world of business one has to make use of language for performing both of these functions. In business transactions, different situations may arise when one has to use language for different types of face-to-face

interactions: (1) conversation for establishing social contact, performing various functions such as introducing oneself and others, making inquiries, giving and seeking information, giving instructions, reporting conversations, giving the company's profile, describing persons, places and processes, developing relationships, getting people to do things, offering help, seeking help, apologizing, persuading, elaborating, arguing a point, explaining a situation, comparing two products, negotiating business deals, asking for and giving advice, etc. (2) participating in discussions, (3) taking part and conducting meetings and interviews, (4) lecturing (5) demonstrating company's products, (6) talking about where you work, describing simple and everyday operations, describing work and business operations, describing office working conditions, consulting and reporting to superiors, asking for and giving advice, talking about problems at work, etc. Most of these encounters will be transactional while some of these will be interactional.

Conversation

You are already aware of social interaction in business i.e. meeting and greeting people in business, and developing a conversation. From your observation, can you recall/derive some rules of face-to-face conversation? Do you think there are rules for conversation in every language of the world? Native speakers learn naturally as part of their growing up in that society and follow these rules in their conversation with other native speakers.

Human beings spend a large part of their lives engaging in conversation and for most of us conversation is among our most significant and engrossing activities. We have already described the importance of communication, particularly face-to-face communication. Researchers from several academic disciplines have looked at conversation as an object of inquiry and come up with fascinating findings. Our understanding of how people conduct conversations has been enriched by observations made by psychologists and linguists, among others.

Before we describe the rules of conversation, let us be clear about the term conversation. As Richards and Schmidt point out, the term conversation is used somewhat ambiguously in current literature. It is used sometimes to refer to any spoken encounter or interaction and sometimes, more restrictedly, to:

"...talk occurring when a small number of participants come together and settle into what they perceive to be a few moments cut off from (or carried on to the side of) instrumental tasks: a period of idling felt to be an end in itself, during which everyone is accorded the right to talk as well as to listen and without reference to a fixed schedule; everyone is accorded the status of someone whose overall evaluation of the subject matter at hand... is to be encouraged and treated with respect; and no final agreement or synthesis is demanded, differences of opinion to be treated as unprejudicial to the continuing relationship of the parties." (Goffman 1976) All talk, it is pointed out, is rooted in its surroundings. But conversation in this more restricted sense is not very firmly rooted to the world as other kinds of utterances. The activities which are directly governed by norms for the use of speech are termed speech events. As speech events, conversations can be contrasted

Communication skills with other types of speech events such as lectures, discussions, interviews, debates and meetings.

Notes **CHARACTERISTICS AND CONVENTIONS OF CONVERSATION**

The Cooperative and Politeness Principle

Conversation is more than merely the exchange of information. When people take part in conversation, they bring to the conversational process shared assumptions and expectations about what conversation is, how conversation develops, and the sort of contribution they are each expected to make. When people engage in conversation they share common principles of conversation that lead them to interpret each other's utterances as contributing to the conversation.

One of the assumptions we make when we take part in conversation is that if I ask you a question, whatever you say will somehow be interpretable as constituting an answer to my question. Consider the following example:

(2) A: Which generator did you buy?

B: It is a Honda.

Let us now consider the following:

(3) A: Which generator did you buy?

B: You could have killed it.

In this latter case the speaker B does not seem to have followed the principle described above and hence the resulting exchange is un-interpretable.

The philosopher Grice has described four Maxims or Principles of Cooperative Behaviour which speakers observe in conversation. These are:

1. Maxim of Quantity: Make your contribution just as informative as required.

2. Maxim of Quality: Make your contribution one that is true.

3. Maxim of Relation: Make your contribution relevant.

4. Maxim of Manner: Avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Be brief and orderly.

Conversation is more than a series of exchanges; it consists of exchanges which are initiated and interpreted according to intuitively understood and socially acquired rules and norms of conversational cooperation. These can in turn be manipulated to create a wide range of meanings beyond the level expressed directly by the utterances in the conversation themselves.

Consider the following example:

(4) A: It is very hot in here.

B: I'll open the window.

We can infer the meaning of B's response. The room is hot, probably because the windows are closed, so if the window is opened cool fresh air will come in and cool the room. B's response is thus quite relevant and interpretable.

We also know that the rules of conversational implicature, dependent on manipulating the four maxims, can be used to express sarcasm, irony, criticism and a range of other types of inferential meaning. Consider the following exchange:

A: How is the food?

B: There is plenty to fill your belly.

B is manipulating the maxims of conversational implicature to suggest that the other qualities of the food are not worth mentioning.

However, in the business world the emphasis is on clarity of communication and indirect speech acts and manipulation of maxims are generally avoided. The relevance of Grice's Maxims to conversation in a second/foreign language is dependent on the degree to which such maxims are universal or language specific. In Indian culture, for example, even during an interview for a job, candidates are very modest while talking about themselves and their achievements; while in the European context the tendency is to display oneself to an extent which an Indian might term 'boasting, or 'bragging'.

Adjacency Pairs

One way in which meanings are communicated and interpreted in conversation is through the use of what have been called adjacency pairs. Adjacency pairs are utterances produced by two successive speakers such that the second utterance is identified as related to the first as an expected follow-up. The two form a pair, the first utterance constituting a first pair part and the next utterance constituting a second pair part. Adjacency pair is described as the basic structural unit in conversation consider the following examples of adjacency pairs:

(a) Greeting-Greeting A: Hi

B: Hi

(b) Compliment-Acceptance A: That's nice hat.

B: Thanks.

The basic rule of adjacency pair operation is that when a speaker produces a recognizable first pair part, s/he should stop talking and the conversational partner should produce a recognizable second pair part. Adjacency pairs thus provide for turn-taking, and also prescribe the type of talking that the next talker can do.

Openings and Closings

Conversations, it is pointed out, do not simply begin and end. The openings and closings of conversations and other types of speech events are organized and orderly. All transitions from a state of non-talk to talk or from talk to non-talk, require engineered solutions. Openings and closings are problematic for the native speakers as well and have to be learnt like other social behaviours. For non-native speakers it is an area which needs special attention.

Openings and closings are speech event-specific. For a formal meeting, for example, there is an initial summons (a memo, circular along with the agenda, etc.) We will talk about this topic in some detail when we discuss below different types of face-to-face interaction.

A conversation is quite different from many other speech events in that it has no specified setting, no time or place, no required roles other than 'persons' involved (though some external roles such as boss/secretary may not be shed), no pre-specified agenda, and a quorum of simply two or more. Like other speech activities, however, conversations must be opened, and commonly this is done through the use of an adjacency pair such as Greeting-Greeting, Request-Grant, Question- Answer, or Statement-Response as in the following speech event:

A: Good morning

B: Morning. Can I help you?

A: I want to see Mr. Bhatnagar.

B: Which Mr. Bhatnagar do you want? We've two Bhatnagars in this office.

Communication skills	A: Mr. Mukul Bhatnagar. He's Director Finance.
	B: Do you have an appointment?
Notes	A: I'm afraid not.
	B: Let me check if he is free. You are Mr.?
	A: Mr. Malhotra. Deepak Malhotra from ABC. (Mr. Malhotra takes his seat after a few minutes in the waiting room).
	B: I'm sorry he's in meeting.
	A: When is the meeting likely to be over?
	B: No idea. Can I take a message?
	A: Will you tell him I came to see him?
	B: I will, certainly
	A: Thank you.
	B: You're welcome.

Topic Development

Another important dimension of conversational organization is the way topics are selected for discussion within and the strategies used by the speakers to introduce develop, or change topics within the conversation. Coherent conversations respect norms concerning choice of topics, for example, in a business meeting members will take turn to speak only on "the items on the agenda notified in advance and from among these only on that item which is being discussed at the moment."

Topics may develop in a recognizable structure as, for example, the language of buying and selling, court trial, doctor and patient conversation, etc.

Turn Taking

Conversation by definition involves two or more people. But the distribution of talking among the participants is not merely random. It is governed by turn-taking norms, conventions which determine who talks, when, and for how long. One who talks too much and does not allow time for others, or one who contributes nothing to the conversation arouses negative evaluations. Rules for turn-taking differ according to the type of speech event. In the classroom, for example, students generally raise a hand to take a turn to talk.

Repairs

The process of conversation involves monitoring to ensure that the intended messages have been communicated and understood. This involves correction whenever it is suspected that the message has not been received as intended. The term-repair refers to the efforts by the speaker or the hearer to correct trouble spots in conversation. Repairs may be initiated by either the speaker or the hearer:

A: Mr. Malhotra isn't in his office.

B: Sorry!

A: Mr. Malhotra is not in his office at the moment.

CONVERSATIONAL PROBLEM OF SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE USERS

The maxims and rules for conversation differ from culture to culture and hence pose problems for non-native speakers. There may be different conventions operating in the mother tongue and target language. We have already hinted at some of the problems while describing the maxims and

rules above. Let us consider some more problems and how we can overcome them. Can you recall what we said above about non-native use of maxim of quantity. Non-native speakers may provide less information than is expected of them. Another crucial problem could be to interpret the intended speech act appropriately. Consider what is wrong with the following interaction:

A: Hello!

B: ABC Distributors. Good Morning.

A: Can I speak to Mr. Malhotra?

B: Yes, you can.

Evidently B has misunderstood A's question as a question rather than a request to bring the person on the line. What do you think would be the right response?

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONVERSATION AND OTHER SPEECH EVENTS

Hymes uses the term speech event for activities that are directly governed by norms for the use of speech. As speech events, conversations can be contrasted with other types of speech events such as lectures, discussions, meetings, interviews, debates, etc. We recognize each of these speech events as distinct by virtue of differences in the number of participants who take part in them, as well as through differences in the type and amount of talking expected of the participant, the setting, quorum, if any, required, etc. Speech events, like conversations, as shown above, also have identifiable rules for proper beginnings, middles and endings. Violations if noticed, are frowned upon.

Openings and closings, as already said above, are speech event-specific. For many speech events, there is an initial summons, e.g. a memo/notice calling for a meeting and participants assemble over time before the occasion actually begins. There may be a specified setting (e.g. hall, classroom) and the persons who assemble are oriented to as specified category members (e.g. members of the club, union, students faculty at a college lecture). Some events, such as a formal meeting (e.g. the Annual General Body Meeting of the Company) require a specified number of participants before the events may properly be seen as beginning, such as a quorum at a meeting. Some speech events may not begin as soon as the required persons are present. These may require formal markers before the event properly begins. When the audience assemble for a lecture, there may be background noise and conversation may be in progress at different corners in the room, but the lecture itself has not properly begun until an authorized person uses some sort of attention-getter, saying 'Right, or O.K. It is time to begin,' etc. We will be talking about interviews and meetings in subsequent units when we will illustrate in detail how these two specific speech events differ from conversation. Here we propose to consider another feature in which lecture differs from conversation. While talking about the differences between spoken and written modes we said that one of the differences between these two modes of communication is that writing is an activity that is nonreciprocal in nature. Can you recall what we meant by this term non-reciprocal? Lecture, whether written or spoken from notes, tends to be non-reciprocal in this sense. In other words, there are no adjacency pairs, no turn taking, no immediate verbal feed-back as we have in conversation (though in the classroom lecture, the teacher might get feedback from expressions on

Communication skills students faces, raising of hands, uneasy movements, etc.) so s/he has of necessity to propel the communication on her/his own. This, however, does not mean that lecture (or written discourse) is not an interactive process of negotiation. It is interactive but this interaction is conducted by the speaker himself/herself by enacting the roles of speaker as well as of audience. Since there is no immediate reaction s/he has to anticipate what it is likely to happen and provide for any possible misunderstanding and unclarity arising from the lack of shared knowledge.

Notes

In the words of Widdowson, the act of lecturing is the enactment of an exchange, with the speaker taking on the roles of both interlocutors. But whereas in spoken discourse (conversation) this process of negotiation is typically overt and reciprocal, in lectures and written communication it is covert and non-reciprocal. Because of the absence of immediate verbal reaction from her/his audience the speaker has a basic conveyancing problem: S/he has a certain message to impart and s/he has to prepare the ground and set up conditions favourable to the reception of such information. S/he does this by continually shifting her/his function from speaker to hearer, enacting the interaction by playing the role of each interlocutor as in the following example:-

Yesterday I spoke to you about Canada. Today I shall talk about Australia which happens to be the next topic. Australia is a land of contrasts. It is geologically one of the oldest of land masses, yet it ranks as one of the youngest of nations. It is half a world away from Europe, but its people are largely of European descent and they follow a Western lifestyle. If we look at the above text we find that the speaker makes an assertion in the first sentence and the subsequent sentences are then said to support what s/he says in the first sentence as if to answer the question of the listener, how can you say that? Can you give proof? We can write this text as follows:

Speaker: Australia is a land of contrasts.

Listener(s): How can you say that? Can you give some proof?

Speaker: It is geologically one of the oldest of land masses, yet it ranks as one of the youngest of nations.

Listener(s) Can you give more examples?

Speaker: Yes. It is half a world away from Europe, but its people are largely of European descent and they follow a Western lifestyle.

A lecture, like written discourse, thus involves non-reciprocal interaction and the result of this is a text. The audience must interpret this text to reconstitute the interaction as it does not reveal the second person's (or the audience's) reactions which the speaker (and the writer) anticipates by enacting the other participant's role. It is in this sense that lecturing is covert and non-reciprocal and differs from conversation which is overt and reciprocal.

SUMMARY

In this unit we have tried to understand what communication is and defined it as the process of meaningful interaction between two or more persons with a view to arriving at a common meaning and understanding. Communication can be achieved through use of language, written or spoken, and gestures. There are different types of communication and these are used on different occasions. Each of these modes of communication has its own advantages and disadvantages. Communication may involve repeated interactions or

negotiations of meaning and the addresser and the addressee play active roles in this process. Effective communication in business is as important as the blood circulating in the human body and hence managers do their best to overcome all barriers to communication.

*The Process of
Communication*

Notes

Further, we also described different types of face-to-face interactions, especially conversation, its main features and how to develop it to make it meaningful. We have also described briefly some other types of face-to-face interactions and how they differ from each other and from conversation.

Review Question

Q1- What is Communication?

Q2- What are The Process of Communication?

Q3-What are the Different Types of Communication?

Q4- Write about Written vs. Oral Communication

Q5- What are the Different Types of Face-to-Face Interactions

Q6-What are the Difference between Conversation and Other Speech Events

FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT-2 TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES

CONTENTS

- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Warm Up
- ❖ Speaking and Listening: Commonly Used Phrases in Telephone Conversations
- ❖ Reading: Conference Calls
- ❖ Vocabulary
- ❖ Writing and Listening: Leaving a Message
- ❖ Grammar and Usage: The Perfect Tenses
- ❖ Pronunciation: Contracted Forms
- ❖ Summary
- ❖ Suggested Readings

OBJECTIVES

In this unit

- We will show you the difference between face-to-face and telephone conversation; and telephone conversations and conference calls
- We will introduce you to certain commonly used words and phrases while telephoning as well as certain conventional expressions which you may learn
- Since we often need to ask questions in a telephone conversation, we will revise who-questions with you.
- In the Pronunciation section, we deal with contracted forms.

WARM UP

Look at the pictures below:

Can you identify what is happening in each of them? Discuss with a partner the differences between face-to face communication and telephone conversation. Re-arrange the following features in the respective tables. Effective telephone conversation comes only with practice but it is possible to acquire the skills needed to make successful telephone calls in all situations.

We make eye contact

- We speak slowly
- We can't see our partner
- We use our hands to show directions
- We speak casually
- We say "May I take a message"
- We say "Hello!"

We shake hands

- We smile
- We guess the other person's reactions
- We can see our counterpart's reactions
- We speak carefully
- We speak a little loudly since the other person may not hear us
- We try to be brief

The language used on the telephone is specialized but it is easy to acquire the most common expressions used in various situations. Once you have

mastered the expressions used while making/receiving a phone call, planning your phone calls in advance and preparing notes for them can control the rest of the conversation, so that you don't fumble on the phone.

Telephone
Techniques

Notes

SPEAKING & LISTENING: COMMONLY USED PHRASES IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS

There are a number of phrases and idioms that are commonly used when telephoning. Let's take a look at a dialogue:

- Operator: Hello, Bulchand & Brothers, **can I help you?**
- Amit: This is Amit Kumar. **Can you get me** extension 4200 **please?**
- Operator: **Certainly**, hold on a minute, **I'll put you through...**
- Kamla: Hari Singh's office, Kamla Jagannathan speaking.
- Amit: This is Amit Kumar calling, **is Hari in?**
- Kamla: **I'm afraid he's out at the moment. Can I take a message?**
- Amit: Yes, **Could you ask him to call me** at 914-5136031? I need to talk to him about the Digjam contract; it's urgent.
- Kamla: **Could you repeat** the number please?
- Amit: Yes, that's 914-5136031, and this is Amit Kumar.
- Kamla: Thank you Mr. Kumar, **I'll make sure Mr. Singh gets this message.**
- Amit: Thanks, bye.
- Kamla: Bye.

Study the expressions in bold above, and those in the speech balloons below.

- ✓ May I know who is speaking/calling?
- ✓ Excuse me, who am I
- ✓ This is Amit...
- ✓ Amit speaking...
- ✓ Please connect me
- ✓ To...
- ✓ Can/could I speak to...?
- ✓ I'd like to speak to... Hold on a moment please...
- ✓ Putting you through...
- ✓ Not until this evening, I'm afraid.
- ✓ How can I help you?
- ✓ I'm sorry he is not available...
- ✓ Could you tell me
- ✓ When he is expected/will be back?
- ✓ Can you please ask him to give me a ring/call me back?
- ✓ Is there anything I can do?
- ✓ Sure, I'll give him the message as soon as he gets in...
- ✓ Thank you very much/thanks for the help

Using Polite and Friendly Expressions

This task is to make you aware of the importance of using Polite and Friendly expressions while speaking on the telephone. Apart from the expressions that we use, the tone of voice also plays an important role in creating an impression over the telephone. Keep this in mind while practising the role-play activities in the sections that follow.

Speak out the following expressions with your partner and you alternating between the two columns below. Use a brusque or rude voice for the expressions in Column I and a polite tone for those in Column II. Consider

Communication skills what effect the pairs of expressions would have on the person at the other end of the telephone line:

- Notes
- Hello, who is this? Ronald here, may I know who is speaking?
 - Hold on... Could you please hold the line while I look for him?
 - Spell your name, will you. Could you spell your name, please?
 - He is not here right now. Call later. I'm afraid Dr Das is not available right now—would you like to leave a message?
 - Mr. Gray is not here. I think Mr. Gray is not here at the moment. Is there anything I can do for you?
 - Put me through to the Manager. Can I speak to the manager, please?
 - Tell him that tomorrow's meeting is cancelled.
 - Could you take a message for him?
 - Please inform him that tomorrow's meeting is cancelled.

READING: CONFERENCE CALLS

A conference call is a telephone call by which a caller can speak to several people at the same time. These calls have become more and more relevant in present day workplaces where a lot of work is conducted long distance. A conference call is like holding a meeting on the telephone and the ground rules are the same as that for a meeting. In addition to the etiquette followed at a meeting we need to take care of some technical aspects as well. Here are some points about the rules to be observed while participating in a conference call. **Read carefully and answer the questions that follow.**

Learn How to Make a Conference Call

In today's business world, keeping in touch with remote locations is critical. In fact, not only are intra company calls becoming ever more popular, but intercompany conference calls are becoming a viable meeting venue. Team or trade decisions can now be made by phone, and critical information can be disseminated quickly, cheaply, and securely.

Do your best to minimize background noise and interruptions. Turn off the ringer or any other phone line in your vicinity. Do not breathe into the mouthpiece of your phone, as it is disruptive. If you will be taking notes via a computer keyboard that could be heard by others, be sure you have a mute button on your phone and use it. If you have call waiting, disconnect it before calling. Use a land telephone line (corded phone) to call in. Be sure to TEST the working condition of your equipment beforehand.

Important:

- Avoid computer-or Internet based dial-up methods
- Avoid speakerphones. Use the hand-held receiver for speaking.
- Avoid cell phones. Do not call from a moving vehicle, whether or not you are the one driving. If you must use a cell phone, use it from a parked location with a strong signal and automatically mute yourself.
- If you use a cordless phone, stay close to the base to avoid static.

Call the given conference call line number at the exact time you are scheduled

--if you call in too early, you may interrupt another group's conference call.

Introduce yourself when you begin speaking. Others may not know your voice! When you call, you may hear others on the line. Wait to be greeted before introducing yourself. If you are late to a call, dial in and be silent until you are clear about what is going on in the call or for someone to greet

you. If you leave the call early, do not announce you are leaving. Just hang up.

Try to stay on schedule. Stick to the topics laid out in your agenda, and be respectful of others' time! End the call clearly.

Find out if there are special rules for your organization's conference call.

WRITING AND LISTENING: LEAVING A MESSAGE

When someone you have called is away, you may decide to leave a message for him/ her. Look at the following message:

Mr. Bhalla or Bali had called about some party—wants you to call him back.”

Now listen to the recording and decide what is missing in the message. Write the message.

2. In the recording you will listen to Neelam Sinha calling the office of Spectrum Magazines to enquire about the status of her subscription for two of their magazines. Listen and fill in the message form given below:

Message form

Message for:

Name of the Caller:

Time of Call:

Subscription Number:

Phone number:

Nature of Query:

Message:

Leaving a Message on the Answering Machine

Sometimes we may have to leave a message for someone on an answering machine. Here we need to record our own message. Consider how this message would be different from the messages we covered in the previous sections. The difference between the two kinds of messages would be that while one is written giving the factual details only, the message for the answering machine is like recording a one-sided conversation, and requires continuous speech.

Telephone

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When we are confronted with an answering machine instead of a person at the other end, we have to record our message and since the other person cannot get feedback from us, it is doubly important that the message be clear and accurate. So perhaps it might be safer to hang up, prepare the message and then ring again, once we are well rehearsed with the message. Consider the points that you would need to cover in the message. Look at the following: Introduction: “Hello, this is Anita”, or more formally, “My name is Anita Thakur”. State the time and the reason for your call, “It’s ten in the morning, and I’m calling to find out if ...”, “I’m phoning to see whether...” “I’m ringing to tell you that...” etc. Make a request: “Can you call me back?” “Would you be able to...?” Leave your telephone number: “My number is...” “You can reach me at...” “You can call me at...”

Conclude: “Thanks a lot, bye”. “Talk to you later, bye”.

GRAMMAR AND USAGE

Asking Who-Questions:

Examples:

You want to know where the nearest payphone is.

*Telephone
Techniques*

Notes

Communication skills	Where's the nearest payphone? Find out how she spells her name.
Notes	How do you spell your name?

Perfect Tenses:

The **Present Perfect Tense** is used to indicate

1. Something that has happened in the past but has an impact on the present.
E.g. Anil has gone to the market. (He went to the market and so he is not available right now.)

2. Something that has begun in the past and continues to the present moment. e.g. "I have tried your number many times since morning. ("I have been trying your number and am doing so even now").

3. A past event that has news value.

E.g. Mohan has received a call from Amitabh Bacchan on KBC.

4. Something that has happened in the past but the time is not specified.

E.g. I have seen him before. (I have definitely seen him before the present moment but I am not sure when that was.)

The **Past Perfect Tense** is used to indicate something that has happened before a specific time in the past. It is used to refer to the earlier of the two events both of which have taken place in the past.

E.g. The phone had stopped ringing when Amit entered the room. (The phone was ringing until Amit entered the room but stopped just short of his entry. Notice that the perfect tense relates the two events.)

PRONUNCIATION: CONTRACTED FORMS

Study the following sentences. They are examples of spoken English. In each case there is a contraction of the auxiliary or the be-verb as the case may be

I'll put you through (I + will)

I'm afraid he's out at the moment (I + am)

These are called contractions, and are an essential part of spoken English. The negation 'not' and the pronoun 'us' are also contracted sometimes in spoken English. Now read out the above sentences aloud making sure that you are pronouncing the contractions correctly, that is, as they are written and not in their expanded form. Here are some more sentences spoken in this unit. Can you say what the following contractions stand for? Say the sentences aloud using the contracted forms. Now listen to the tape.

1. I can't hear you at all.
2. I won't be able to make it tomorrow.
3. I'd like to invite you...
4. That's fine (with me).
5. Why don't we meet?
6. We're four adults.
7. Sheila couldn't get through to Ramesh.
8. I haven't been receiving any issues of the magazine.

SUMMARY

In this unit, we introduced you to the sort of English that will help you make a phone call or answer a phone call in general and for business purposes.

We, perhaps, take this skill for granted. However, after going through the unit, you would have realized that to make an effective phone call you require a different style and a special language. We have tried to introduce you to this language.

Conference calls, leaving messages on the answering machine are some of the new developments in “Telephoning”. We have touched on these aspects as well.

*Telephone
Techniques*

In Grammar, we have revised wh-questions and Present and Past Perfect tense. In the pronunciation section we deal with contracted forms. Practice them on the tape by repeating after us.

Notes

Review Question

Q1-What are Conference Calls?

Q2-What is grammar and usages?

FURTHER READINGS

Jean Naterop and Rod Rexell, 1987, Telephoning in English. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leo Jones and Richard Alexander, 1996. New International Business English Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

UNIT 3 JOB APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

CONTENTS

- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Warm up
- ❖ Reading
- ❖ Vocabulary: Apply for a Job
- ❖ Curriculum Vitae
- ❖ Language Focus: Some Useful Words
- ❖ Study Skills: Preparing for an Interview
- ❖ Listening
- ❖ Speaking
- ❖ Writing
- ❖ Summary
- ❖ Suggested Readings

OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to learn:

- how to write applications for jobs
- how to write an effective Curriculum Vitae
- how to prepare for job interviews
- about useful vocabulary for CVs and interviews
- about the kind of questions asked at interviews

WARM UP

1. Read the advertisement below and answer the questions as quickly as possible:

Sales Executives (North) For a Leading Multinational Company

We are looking for excellent sales people with a proven track record for selling our full range of Consumer Durable products.

The position is based in Chandigarh and the candidate will be responsible for sales in Punjab and Haryana.

Experience of selling similar products is essential.

Remuneration is comparable with the best in the industry, and will be linked to performance.

Apply to Mr. Sudir Taneja
Personnel Executive,
XYZ Co.
P.O.Box: 3675

- a. What is the job mentioned in the advertisement?
- b. What is the salary being offered?
- c. Where is the job located?
- d. What kind of company is it?

e. What qualities is the company looking for?

READING

You are Sudhir Taneja, Personnel officer at XYZ Company. You've received a Memo from your Manager Ms. Renu Bhardwaj, giving you guidelines for screening the application letters you have received. Read Salil Mishra's Application Letter and CV and makes a preliminary assessment along the lines of the questions in your manager's memo.

Memo from Ms. Renu Bhardwaj.

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Notes

XYZ Company

Internal memorandum

To: Sudhir Taneja (Personnel Officer)
From: Renu Bhardwaj (Manager,HRD)
Date: 27th March,2004
Subject: Recruitment of Sales Executive (North)

When you look at the applications for the Sales Executive (North), please make notes on the following questions:

- Where do they live? (We need a local person)
- How old are they? (We need seasoned but energetic people)
- Do they have the right kind of work experience?
- Can they move quickly?
- Why do they want to change jobs?
- Do you think they will fit our work environment?

Letter of Application

5, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Chennai,
India

Mr. Sudhir Taneja
XYZ Co.
P.O.Box: 3675
New Delhi

Dear Mr. Taneja,

I am writing in response to your advertisement for a Sales Executive in last week's Asian Times.

I am 26 years old. I have a B.Com. degree and Diploma in Sales and Marketing Management. I live in Chennai and speak excellent English and Hindi and a little Tamil.

I have two years experience of selling consumer goods in a well-established firm in Chennai. I am very hard working and enjoy traveling and meeting people.

I am very interested in working for an MNC. I assure you that if you give me a chance, I will perform to your full satisfaction.

Please find enclosed my CV.

I will be grateful if you give me an opportunity for an interview.

Yours truly,

Salil Mishra

You will now read a Curriculum Vitae-you have to decide how to improve it.

Notes

Name: Salil Mishra
 Date of Birth: 09-04-1976
 Marital Status: Unmarried
 Father's Name: Shri Radhey Shyam Sinha
 Father's Occupation: Loan Officer, Regional Office
 Allahabad Bank, Gaya
 Family Background: I belong to a family of educated, well placed
 Kayasths.
 My two uncles are officers in Nationalized banks.
 My elder brother is a Lecturer in Govt. college. My
 two younger brothers are studying. One is in college
 and the younger one is in school.
 Address for Correspondence: 5, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
 Chennai,
 India
 Present Address: c/o Shri Radhey Shyam Sinha,
 Gali No. 15
 Khari Baoli, Gaya, Bihar
 India

Education

Degree/Diploma	Name of School/College	Subject	Division
High School	D.A.V School, Patna	All subjects	High 2 nd Div.
AISSC	-do-	Commerce	1 st Div. (among Top 10 in Class)
B.Com. Diploma in Computers	Patna Govt. College Aptel Computers Centre	Commerce MS Office incl MS Word, Excel &Power Point	2 nd Div.
Diploma in Marketing & Management	AIMIM	Management with Spl in Sales and Marketing	High 2 nd Div.

Work Experience

1. Sept. 1999-May 2000: Salesman with M/s Purohit Trading Company, which is a leading showroom in Patna for selling all Electrical goods like Fridge, Geyser, TV, etc.
2. July 2000-continuing - Sales Manager with M/s Venkatraman & Company. This is a Dealership for all leading Photocopier and Fax machines. I am doing very well and am expecting a promotion soon.

Hobbies: Cricket and Singing.

CURRICULUM VITAE

The Curriculum Vitae or personal bio data is a statement of facts which includes a summary of your educational and academic backgrounds research experience, work experience, awards, honours, affiliations, skills, interests and other details. A good Curriculum Vita should be:

- Clear - well-organized and logical

- Concise - relevant and necessary
- Complete - includes everything you need
- Consistent - doesn't mix styles or fonts
- Current - up-to-date

*Job
Applications
and Interviews*

Notes

Curriculum Vitae

1 _____

Name: Dhara Taneja
Date of Birth: 8 September 1980
Nationality: Indian
Address: 45 A sector, Shakti Nagar, Bhopal, 462022
E mail: dhara.taneja@hotmail.com
Telephone: 0755 2586456

2 _____

To become a successful Senior Executive in a large Travel & Tourism Company

3 _____

2000 -2002	Post Graduation in Travel & Tourism	Excel Institute Ist Div. Bhopal
2000 – 2001	Diploma in Marketing Management	St Teresa's IInd Div. Institute,Bhopal
1997 – 2000	BBA	RBT College Ist Div

4 _____

2002 to the present

- working as Management Trainee with Golden Tours & Travels, Bhopal.
- Handling prospective customers.
- Conceptualized, creating and distributing brochures.
- Supervising the maintenance of records of customer queries.
- Attending to customer queries

5 _____

Projects: 1. won special appreciation for project on **International Travel Options for Middle Income Groups**

6 _____

organizational skills
strong customer relations
interpersonal skills
computer proficiency

7 _____

Debates & public speaking
Member of Organizing Committees for several cultural Events

8 _____

Sports: swimming, badminton
Cultural : Member of Spic Macay – an organization that promotes traditional art and culture

9 _____

1. Ms Anila Lal, HOD Travel & Tourism, Excel Institute, Bhopal 462012; Tel : 0755 2457903
2. Mr R Andrews, Principal, St Teresa's Institute, T T Nagar, Bhopal 462005; Tel : 0755 2488345

Don't you think this is a better CV than Salil Mishra's? Why do you think so?

C.V. OF EXPERIENCED APPLICATION

The format for Curriculum Vitae given above is suitable for first time job applicant or those who have very little job experience. However, once you have some years of work experience behind you, it is advisable to format your CV differently making sure that you emphasize your work history, career skills and career achievements. Here is one such sample CV.

Mr Arun Nagpal
 243 Sector II, Gulmohar
 Indore, M P
 India
 Phone numbers: 0433 2568342, 9826045632

Education

MBA	Marketing	Devi Ahilya University, Indore 1997
MA	Economics	Rani Jhansi University 1995-1991
B.A.	Economics	-DO-

CAREER PROFILE

1999 till date	Till Date: Senior Manager (Marketing) Gateway Motors, New Delhi.
1994-1999:	Manager (Sales) Swift Motors, Chennai
1990-1994:	Executive (Sales and Marketing) Balwant Electronics, New Delhi

CAREER SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE

- Advertising
- Market positioning
- Product testing
- Media handling
- Staff supervision
- Budget management
- Marketing strategies
- New product introduction
- Oral & written presentations
- Pricing strategies
- Facilities management:

CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS

- As Senior Manager Marketing for Gateway Motors, initiated and executed aggressive new product introductions for national market
- Co directed product development, packaging, market positioning, advertising and testing of two new vehicles launched by the company
- Was a member of the core team which re designed and launched a highly successful advertising campaign with a new face, for the company's old products
- Assumed a central role in the company's turnaround to profitability after a lean period of eight years
- Formulated strategies to resist and overcome stiff competition from rival brand
- Earned two promotions in the high flyer category in the last seven years

References Provided Upon Request

LANGUAGE SKILLS NEEDED AT THE FOCUS: USEFUL WORDS

*Job
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Notes

Here are some more words that could help you to describe your work better. Remember that these words could also be extremely helpful in talking specifically and appropriately about your work during the interview.

Achieved	researched	organized	coordinated
Managed	supervised	classified	conceptualized
Prepared	investigated	expedited	controlled
Implemented	programmed	facilitated	forecasted
Analyzed	assisted	broadened	overcame
Created	designed	developed	established
Scheduled	undertook	generated	presented
Proposed	formulated	handled	integrated
taffed	published	sponsored	optimized
Maintained	devised	administered	allocated

Action verbs can help you to describe your participation in work experience. Out of the given choices identify the suitable action word to complete the given sentences.

- While at work I _____ new challenges.
A. encourage b. maintain c. enjoy d. optimize
- I _____ several important company functions and events.
A. created b. controlled c. developed d. organized
- In the general office the secretaries _____ all word processing and typing.
A. handle b. expedite c. assist d. organize
- I can _____ with difficult customers without losing my patience.
A. deal b. handle c. look after d. cope
- As Manager HRD I _____ a 10% reduction in absenteeism by creating healthier employees through providing a gym in the company premises.
A. gained b. achieved c. made d. optimized
- I _____ advanced technologies in teleconferencing to facilitate better communication across distances.
A. generated b. created c. implemented d. started
- I _____ a central role in the company's turnaround to profitability by helping to cut down on production costs.
A. acquired b. assumed c. enjoyed d. managed
- I _____ tens of thousands of Rupees by cutting down on wasteful expenditure.
A. generated b. produced c. devised d. optimized
- I _____ powerful company resistance to break into the international market where we now have our biggest buyers.
A. opposed b. managed c. controlled d. overcame
- I _____ aggressive new product introductions in keeping with the demands of the changing market.
A. started b. initiated c. assessed d. Produced

STUDY SKILLS: PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

We give below some tips to help you prepare for an interview. You may add some more. ! Go through the copy of your application carefully before the interview. The interview panel is likely to ask specific questions about it.

! Be ready to provide examples and specifics and to elaborate on information on your resume and application.

! Be open and honest.

! If you have filled up a statement of purpose as part of the application, be ready for some probing questions based on this.

! Ask questions, since the interview is as much an opportunity for you to learn about the college as for the college to learn about you.

! Watch your nonverbal clues, such as eye contact, posture, gestures and fidgeting.

! Be courteous to the administrative staff, since how you treat them can have an impact (positive or negative).

! Make a rational assessment of yourself before you go for the interview. Know your strengths and weaknesses.

! Do some homework on the company and get as much information as possible about it.

! Find out details about the available position in advance. This will help you to relate your skills to the position.

! Review skills and abilities questions. Brainstorm issues.

! Give a positive first impression which could include a warm handshake and a pleasant smile.

! Show enthusiasm and interest. Your body language can help you do this.

! Be as natural as possible.

! Listen attentively and concentrate. Do not ever interrupt the interviewer before he / she has completed the question.

LISTENING

You will now hear an audio on types of interviews.

Listen to the audio carefully and state which of these three summaries best describes the audio on types of job interviews?

1. The traditional interview examines the qualifications, experience and skills of the candidates. On the other hand the behavioural interview assesses their psychology and attitude.

2. The major difference between the two kinds of interview is that in the traditional interview applicants are asked general questions whereas in the behavioural interview they are asked personal questions.

3. While the traditional interview assesses the skills and abilities of candidates through general questions, the behavioural interview focuses on questions related to specific situations in which the applicants actually made use of these skills to achieve something or to solve a problem.

SPEAKING

Here are some samples of questions asked during job interviews. Think about possible answers. Record your answers and listen to the recording and assess your responses. You could also practice them with your study partner.

Personal

1. Tell me about yourself.

2. Do you have any hobbies? What do you do in your spare time?

Education

1. How do you think your education has prepared you for this position?
2. What were your favourite subjects/activities at school?
3. Why did you choose your major subject?

Team work

1. What are the characteristics of a successful team?
2. What qualities do you have that make you an effective team player?
3. Do you work better by yourself or as part of a team?
4. What can you contribute to establish a positive working environment for our team?
5. What type of people do you work best with?

Strengths

1. What are your three greatest strengths?
2. What can you contribute to our organization?
3. What are your strong points and how have they helped you in your performance/studies.

Success / Achievement

1. How do you determine or evaluate success?
2. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
3. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
4. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
5. Describe the most rewarding experience of your career thus far.

Analytical Skills

1. Are you analytical? Give us one example of your analytical abilities.
2. Tell us about a particularly difficult problem that you analyzed and what was your recommendation.

Motivation

1. What motivates employees?
2. Name some of the ways that a supervisor can demotivate staff.
3. What are some of the ways in which a supervisor can motivate staff?

Career Goals

1. Where do you want to be 5 years from now in your career?
2. What are your long term career goals?
3. What prompted you to take your current job?
4. Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?

Leadership

1. What is your strongest leadership skill and how will it assist you for this job?
2. Provide us with an example of your leadership ability.

Communication

1. How do you effectively communicate with others?
2. How important is listening to effective communications?
3. What are some of the characteristics of a good listener?
4. Tell us about a situation where you demonstrated good communications skills.

Miscellaneous

1. What new skills or capabilities have you developed recently?
2. Give me an example from a previous job where you've shown initiative.

Communication skills **Here are clues for some of these questions:**

Notes Tell me about yourself.

This is perhaps the most frequently asked question during interviews. It is a question asked at the beginning of the interview and gives the applicant an opportunity to make an opening statement about himself / herself. You can use this to state a summary of your goals, overall professional capabilities, achievements, background (educational and family), strengths, professional objectives and anything about your personality that is relevant and interesting. This question represents an opportunity to lead the interviewer in the direction you want him/her to go e.g., your specialization or whatever else you may wish to highlight.

Remember that the first impression you create will go a long way in the ultimate selection. However, most candidates who are asked this question just blurt out their schooling, college, marks and qualifications. All this is already there in the CV. Why tell the interviewer something s/he already knows?

Emphasise upon the unique characteristics that you possess while answering this question. All of us are unique in our own way. And that is the catch. Actually, everybody has something special and what one needs to do is, to probe into one self and answer the question.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

This is a rather deceptive question and should be prepared carefully. To prepare for this question one should ensure that one makes an objective self assessment of oneself before the interview. Identify and define your strengths and weaknesses. Think about your personality traits that help you to perform better as your strengths, and weakness as what hampers your performance. Be positive: turn a weakness into a strength. For example, you might say: "I often worry too much over my work/ assignments."

What are your hobbies? Do you play any sports?

Through such questions the interviewer may be looking for evidence of your job skills outside of your professional experience. For example, hobbies such as chess or bridge demonstrate analytical skills. Reading, music, and painting are creative hobbies. Individual sports show determination and stamina, while group sort of activities may indicate you are comfortable working as part of a team. Your awareness of the objectives behind such questions can help you answer appropriately.

Also, the interviewer might simply be curious to know whether you have a life outside of work. Employees who have creative or athletic outlets for their stress are often healthier, happier and more productive.

Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?

The ideal answer is one of flexibility. However, be honest. Give examples describing how you have worked in both situations.

Asking Questions during a Job Interview

At most interviews, you will be invited to ask questions of your interviewer. This is an important opportunity for you to learn more about the employer, and for the interviewer to further evaluate you as a job candidate. It requires some advance preparation on your part.

Here are some guidelines for asking questions:

- Prepare five good questions; with the understanding you may not have time to ask them all.

- Ask questions concerning the job, the company, and the industry or profession.
- Your questions should indicate your interest in these subjects and that you have read and thought about them. For example, you might start, "I read in Economic Times that ... I wonder if that factor is going to have an impact on your business."

*Job
Applications
and Interviews

Notes*

WRITING

Asking for Reference

Write a letter to a professor asking him / her if you can mention him / her as a referee in your CV and whether he / she will be willing to provide a reference for you when needed. Include the following points:

- A reminder of who you are (professors teach hundreds of students and should be able to place you)
- request for permission to name him / her a referee
- Inform them about where you are applying – it could be an Institute of Higher Education or a business organization

Now compare your letter with the sample given in the key.

Replying to Letter of Appointment

Here is an appointment letter from a company where you appeared for a job interview. Write a reply.

Maurya Travels

256 Nehru Nagar
New Delhi 110019
Tel: 91 011 26018563
E mail: maurya.travels@sancharnet.in

8 September 2003

Dear Ms Dhara Taneja

Thank you for attending the interview on 3 September 2003. I am pleased to offer you the post of Sales Executive in our Marketing Division at a starting salary of Rs 15000 per month. You will be required to join duty on 1 October 2003.

As discussed with you, the office hours are from 9.30 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday. You will be entitled to 2 weeks of annual paid holiday.

Please confirm acceptance of this appointment in writing and that you can take up this duty from 1 October.

Yours Truly

Ashwinder Singh
G M, HRD

SUMMARY

Writing an effective letter of application for a job and a neat and meaningful CV are difficult skills to acquire. In this unit we have tried to make you aware of the following:

What employers want from the résumé's/CV's they receive.

How to select and organize information in a C.V.

How to create an attractive format we have also given you models of application letters and acceptance letters. In an application letter:

You should provide concrete evidence of your skills and ability to perform the job you are applying for

Communication skills Do not repeat your C.V., but subtly persuade the company that they need your skills.

Notes **REVIEW QUESTION**

Q1- What is Curriculum Vitae

Q2-Write about the C.V. of experienced application

Q3- What do you mean by writing?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Batteiger, R.P. Business Writing: Process and Form. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Lannon M, Tullis G and Troppe T, 1993. Insights into Business. Essex: Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.

UNIT-4 GROUP DISCUSSIONS

*Group
Discussions*

CONTENTS

Notes

- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Reading
- ❖ Writing Skills
- ❖ Listening: How to be Successful in a Group Discussion
- ❖ Study Skills
- ❖ Language Focus
- ❖ Vocabulary
- ❖ Speaking
- ❖ Grammar: Connectives
- ❖ Pronunciation
- ❖ Summary
- ❖ Suggested Readings

OBJECTIVES

Group discussions are part of the admission procedure in many Institutes of Higher Education. Besides, they also play a major role in the recruiting process for various administrative and high level posts in Business organizations. The objective of this Unit is to find answers to questions like:

- What is it that makes Group Discussions an important tool of assessment?
- What is a Group Discussion?
- What does Group Discussions assess?
- Methods and procedures in Group Discussions.
- Group Discussion skills.
- Language for Group Discussions.
- Assessment Criteria

How efficiently and effectively people get along with one another, respect each others' ideas, and resolve their inevitable professional and linguistic differences is going to result in success or failure.

To what extent do you agree with the above statement?

READING

The 21st century has witnessed an increased focus and dependence on technology. Consequently we spend a lot of time in front of our computers.

1 Regardless of the use of Information technology, major decisions and sales are made on the basis of interpersonal communication.

2. In the world of Sales, it's often said that people don't just buy products; they buy concepts sold to them through the ideas and feelings of their salesperson.

3 Some of the most important interpersonal communication skills necessary to communicate effectively face-to-face include speaking and listening, establishing rapport, and understanding and accommodating differences when communicating across personality, gender, and cultural lines.

4. A Group Discussion is a test of the interpersonal communication skills of a candidate.

5. It assesses the capacity of a person to interact constructively as member of a group and to make a meaningful contribution to the discussion. You can do

Communication skills	so only if you have a good knowledge base, the ability to structure your arguments logically and the skill to communicate your ideas effectively.
Notes	<p>A. Plain and simple, people like to do business with people they like.</p> <p>B. Hence the importance of interpersonal communicative skills cannot be overstated.</p> <p>C. These precisely are the skills required for Group Discussions.</p> <p>D. It is often used as a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of a person in a group activity.</p> <p>E. If we're not careful, we may lose the ability to communicate effectively face-to-face.</p>

Types of Group Discussions

1. A topic is given to the group by the GD Coordinator and the participants are asked to discuss it for duration of 15-20 minutes. Sometimes participants are asked to decide a topic by themselves. They are then given 3 – 5 minutes to think about the topic before the GD actually starts.

2. A printed case study is given to the group and the candidates are given time to read the case before they actually begin the discussion. In this method of group discussion the following procedure is recommended:

- Enumerate the facts of the case
- Define symptoms
- Identify problem
- Suggest solution / solutions

Some more Food for Thought

- ✓ Be assertive but not aggressive
- ✓ Ensure you get enough airtime
- ✓ Build up a good knowledge base
- ✓ Structure your ideas logically - convey your ideas convincingly
- ✓ Contribute meaningfully to achieve the right consensus
- ✓ Speak first only if you have something sensible to say
- ✓ Display leadership by
 - Initiating discussion, interpreting topic, carrying discussion forward
 - Not allowing high performers to overshadow non-performers
 - Giving a patient ear to dissenting views
 - Not allowing the group to drift away from the main topic
- ✓ Avoid verbosity and wordiness
- ✓ Give examples to illustrate and substantiate your arguments
- ✓ Use a conversational style & be friendly – interact constructively
- ✓ Be attentive throughout the GD – be a good listener
- ✓ Help restore order in times of chaos
- ✓ Provide a fresh direction when the group is floundering
- ✓ Try to resolve contradictions
- ✓ Synthesize arguments
- ✓ Summarize the discussion at the end
- ✓ Give the right signals through your body language – show attentiveness by looking into the eyes of the speaker, lean forward to listen
- ✓ Address the speaker, not the moderator
- ✓ Thank the moderators while walking out of the hall
- ✓ Do not ask them to comment on your performance

WRITING SKILLS

1. Be assertive but not aggressive

State your ideas and views clearly and emphatically without allowing others to dominate you or prevent you from asserting yourself. Be an active, vocal participant and not a mere listener. But at the same time do not go overboard and become condescending or contemptuous. Nor should you prevent others from stating their viewpoints. That would be aggressiveness.

2. Ensure you get enough airtime.
3. Build up a good knowledge base.

Now check what you have written with what is given in the Answer Key.

LISTENING: HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN A GROUP DISCUSSION?

Listen to a speaker telling you about how to be successful in a group discussion.

On the basis of what the speaker says, state whether the following statements are true or false:

1. You must contribute towards reaching a consensus.
2. In order to be heard you must speak for at least 15 minutes.
3. You can make a meaningful contribution even if you do not know much about the topic being discussed.
4. A fish market scenario is one where each one tries to talk at the same time and emphasize his/ her point of view.
5. If you fail to contribute towards reaching a consensus it means you are not very good at team work.
6. A good listener agrees with what others say.
7. In the end you must summarize only your own point of view.
8. You must feel free to express your disagreement if you do not see eye to eye with another participant.

Check your answers with the Answer Key.

STUDY SKILLS

As you are aware, Group Discussions are often used as part of selection/ recruitment procedure by Institutions and Business Organizations.

Here is a list of some of the abilities that the evaluators look for in participants. Do you think you can add at least two more to the list? You may get some clues from the section 'Some Food for Thought'.

- ✓ Intelligence
- ✓ Depth of understanding
- ✓ Ability to think independently
- ✓ Ability to articulate thoughts
- ✓ Ability to appreciate another's point of view
- ✓ Ability to relate to other people

Assessment Criteria

The participants of Group Discussions are evaluated by a panel of experts. Here are most of the areas on which they would mark you on their evaluation sheets. It would be extremely helpful to keep these in mind when you participate in Group

Discussions.

- ✓ Command over spoken English – it should be logical, coherent, correct, appropriate

Group
Discussions

Notes

- Communication skills
- Notes
- ✓ Knowledge base – authentic information – genuine facts and figures
 - ✓ Convincing power – cogent, decent and constructively forceful attitude
 - ✓ Discourse management – coping with twists and turns of arguments
 - ✓ Body Language – eye contact, body posture, attentiveness
 - ✓ Maturity – candidate must not ‘bully’ others or take undue advantage to prove himself/herself a ‘leader’.
 - ✓ Listening – intelligent and analytical
 - ✓ Supplementing – responding and adding to what another has said before initiating a fresh turn
 - ✓ Initiative and Assertiveness

Beneficial Team Behaviour

- ✓ Initiate discussions
- ✓ Seek information and opinions
- ✓ Suggest procedures for reaching a goal / consensus
- ✓ Clarify or elaborate ideas
- ✓ Summarize
- ✓ Act as a gate-keeper, direct conversational traffic, avoid simultaneous conversations
- ✓ Subdue dominant talkers, make room for reserved and shy people
- ✓ Keep the discussion from digressing
- ✓ Be flexible and creative in resolving differences

A consolidated task based on the inputs given in this section is given in the speaking section.

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Here is some helpful language for group discussions:

" Stating an opinion

- It seems to me...
- In my view...
- I tend to think...
- Its obvious that...
- I believe....
- Clearly,.....

" Interrupting

- Excuse me, may I ask for a clarification on this...
- If I may interrupt...
- Sorry to interrupt but.....

" Handling Interruptions

- Sorry, please let me finish.....
- If I may finish what I am saying.....
- Could you please allow me to complete what I’m saying.....

" Moving the discussion on

- Can we go on to think about.....
- I think we should now move on to consider.....

" Expressing Agreement

- I totally agree
- I agree entirely
- I quite agree
- I couldn’t agree more
- Absolutely / precisely /exactly

- I think you're right

" Expressing disagreement

- I don't agree at all

- I totally disagree

- I think quite differently on this

- I don't really think so

- I'm afraid I can't agree with you there

" Checking comprehension / reformulating

- To put that another way...

- If I follow you correctly...

- So what you're saying is...

- Does that mean...

- Are you saying...

" Making a suggestion

- I suggest that....

- We could.....

- Perhaps we should...

- It might be worth....

- What about.....?

- Why don't we.....?

Word Collocations

In the English language many words occur in groups or pairs naturally or habitually. These are called word collocations. Example: a quick temper. The exercise that follows has collocations with verbs. The first one is done for you as an example.

2. Combine the words in the two columns to make word collocations.

1. Build eye contact
2. Restore arguments
3. Take ideas convincingly
4. Resolve contradictions
5. Synthesize dissenting viewpoints
6. Accommodate responsibility
7. Maintain a consensus
8. Summarize order
9. Provide decisions
10. Convey a fresh direction
11. Accept your objective
12. Define the discussion

SPEAKING

Practice your group discussion skills by arranging to meet with your study partners. Select any of these topics and conduct your discussion. Remember to apply the tips we have given you, the do's and don'ts as well as the formulaic language given in the unit. Ask someone to assess you on the basis of the assessment criteria given in the unit. Some excerpts of a possible model are given for the first topic.

1. What ails Indian sports?

Speaker 1: There is no doubt about the fact that Indian sports has come a long way from what it was in the early days of Independence. However, we also cannot deny that looking at our population and potential, we Indians have not achieved much in the area of Sports. I am of the view that lack of

Communication skills infrastructure is the biggest problem that we face. This is particularly true of smaller towns and the countryside.....

Notes

Speaker 2: I quite agree with what you say about the lack of facilities in small places. But don't you think that a lot of the facilities available in the bigger towns are underutilized?.....

Speaker 3: I'm afraid I don't really agree with you there. Many children wish to make use of the infrastructure but the professional sports persons and sometimes the administrators do not really allow everyone to make use of the facilities. Besides the fee for some of these stadiums is.....

Speaker 4: If I may add here, that besides lack of infrastructure, there is also a great deal of political interference in sports. On many occasions the deserving players are not selected. For example take the case of

2. Is coalition politics here to stay?
3. Should colas be banned for the safety of public health?
4. The cable TV invasion.
5. Education and success – is there a correlation?

GRAMMAR: LINKING WORDS

This passage on whether it is a good strategy to be an opening speaker in a group discussion has some important linking words missing. These may be relative pronouns, conjunctions, conditionals or determiners.

PRONUNCIATION

Here are some more collocations. You can hear them on the tape. Repeat as you hear each one.

1. Cost control
2. Market share
3. Express an opinion
4. Draw a conclusion
5. Break the deadlock
6. Illustrate the point
7. beside the point
8. Made any headway
9. Reach a compromise
10. for the time being

SUMMARY

In this Unit you learnt about:

1. What is a Group Discussion?
2. The importance of GD as a tool for assessment
3. Types of Group Discussions
4. Assessment criteria for GDs
5. Language used in GDs
6. Do's and don'ts for GDs
7. How to take part in an actual group discussion
8. Word collocations

Review Question

Q1-What are the different Types of Group Discussions

Q2- What is Writing Skills

Q3-What do you mean by Language Focus

Q4-What is speaking?

*Group
Discussions*

Notes

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. M V Rodriques, Effective Business communication. Concept Publishing Company

2. Lyn R Clark, Kenneth Zimmer, Joseph Tinervia. Business English and Communication McGraw Hill International.

UNIT 5 MANAGING ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

CONTENTS

- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Warm Up: Ability to Influence and Lead
- ❖ Reading: The Role of a Manager
- ❖ Vocabulary: Leadership
- ❖ Speaking and Listening
- ❖ Language Focus: Degree of Probability
- ❖ Grammar: Modals
- ❖ Writing: Reports
- ❖ Pronunciation
- ❖ Summary
- ❖ Suggested Readings

OBJECTIVES

Managing organizational structures primarily involves a relationship between the leader and the team. In this unit you will learn about:

- Managing people at all levels of organization.
- motivating teams
- dynamics of leadership
- managing conflicts
- taking and implementing decisions

ABILITY TO INFLUENCE AND LEAD

Read the following statements and rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 for each of the following statements. (1 = Not strong in this area, 5 = Very strong in this area).

1. Competence

- The ability to do a job successfully
- doing the job better than expected

2. Discretion

- Ability to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong

3. Attitude

- Ability to maintain a positive attitude in negative situations

4. Honesty and Openness

- Ability to stand for principles
- appreciate and disapprove without bias/prejudice

5. Communication

- Effective communication ability so that everyone understands
- convey decisions without being rude
- listen to everyone without hierarchical blockades
- deal with everyone sensitively

Honestly rate yourself by counting the points.

If you score between 10 and 20 – You need to develop certain skills for effective leadership.

If you score between 30 and 40-You already have skills to lead effectively except for a few things which need improvement.

If you score 50 it means you would be successful in achieving personal as well as organizational goals.

READING: THE ROLE OF A MANAGER

The passage below tells you about the role of a manager. Read it carefully and then answer the questions given at the end of the passage: The role of a manager is closely related to the powers that are given at different levels of the organization – top level, middle level and lower level management. The function of a manager can be divided into formal and informal aspects. Formal functions are to win contracts, delegate duties, express opinion and takes judicious decisions. Informal functions of a manager are related to personal style, ability to influence/charisma, concern for colleagues at all levels i.e. – the way a manager interacts with other people.

A manager leads the team with example and takes the business towards the goals in spite of expected or unexpected changes. In the process s/he achieves personal as well as the company's objectives.

A manager should be able to deal intelligently with tricky situations keeping in mind existing conflicts of interest in the organization. For this the executive should be able to resolve or manage his/her inner conflicts so that his/her decisions are strongly grounded in reality. Greater attention must be given to the organizational structure and creating a strong feeling of security or the organization will greatly suffer.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

1. Listen to this conversation carefully. Here workers are discussing the work environment of their organization. Practice the dialogue with your friend.

Worker

A: We can come and go to our work as we please. You know, we follow flexi-timing.

B: It can't be possible. There should be registers where the workers check-in and check-out.

A: Would you believe this? We may even be asked to decide how much of the profit to share with our employers and how much to invest in the company.

B: You must be joking.!

A: No, the employers feel that the workers must participate in the profit sharing of the company and be stake-holders.

B: That's amazing!

A: The workers will soon decide their own salaries soon. In this way, we will try and deserve our salaries.

B: Your company must be the only one with such a democratic structure!

LANGUAGE FOCUS: DEGREE OF PROBABILITY

1. Situations often require that the speaker express their meaning with precision. The degree of probability has to be defined.

- 100% - Certain I am certain of the profit.
- 75% - Likely It is likely to be installed today.
- 50%- Possible It is possible that targets may not be met this quarter due to floods.
- 25% - Unlikely It is unlikely that he would be called for an investigation.
- 0% - Impossible It is impossible that she will be called again.

GRAMMAR: MODALS

The **modal verbs** are a special group of **auxiliary verbs**. We use them **before other verbs** to express certain meanings-for example **permission, ability, possibility, certainty**.

We list below some of the modals and their functions.

Can = (ability; requests; permission)

Could = (ability, possibility; polite requests)

Would = (polite request)

Will = (offer) (expressing the future)

Shall = suggestion, offer

Should = advice

May = possibility

Have got to = obligation

Must = obligation

Need = necessity

Underline the correct option. The first one is done for you.

May/should/mustn't I help you?

1. If you travel to U.K. you can/should/must have a visa.

2. You shouldn't/don't have to /couldn't laugh at old people.

3. Passengers must/must not/should not smoke in the toilets.

4. I think you should/must/may eat less and exercise more.

5. You mustn't/may not/needn't tell me if you don't want to.

6. You may/have to should drive on the left in Britain.

7. She makes new clothes every week. She can/could/must have plenty of money

8. She doesn't answer the phone. She mustn't can't/shouldn't be in her office.

WRITING: REPORTS

Imagine that your Director has asked you to find out the precautions and preparations needed to arrange for the disaster management provisions in your company. These are the notes you've made. Draft a report to your director by expanding the notes into paragraphs.

Identified Dangers

1. Fire-particularly in areas where a lot of paper is stored

2. Earthquake – cracks due to previous earthquake.

3. Lightening – inadequate safety measures

Proposals

1. Fire frightening equipment to be maintained regularly

2. Fire fighting training to the support staff.

3. Display of safety regulations in the area.

4. Hooters to be installed –signal warning

5. Exit outlets to be highlighted

6. Important telephone numbers-Hospital, Fire Brigade, Doctors, officials.

7. Action committee to be formed.

Begin your report as follows:

To : Mr. Sunil Sen, Director

From : (Your name) Date :

Before you write your report we would like to offer a few suggestions.

Steps in Writing Reports

Before you begin writing a report, you must ask yourself a number of questions: what is the purpose of the report? What problem or problems are you expected to solve? Is it to pass on information, or persuade someone to take a particular course of action? Or to answer a question? Who are your readers? When is the report due? etc. After you have a clear idea of the kind of problem that you are expected to investigate, you may begin the actual work of research and collection of facts. It may be a good idea to write down your statement of purpose; it will help you to be precise and remind you of your focus. The procedure leading to the writing of the report would involve six distinct stages:

1. Investigating the sources of information
2. Taking notes
3. Interpreting and analyzing the facts
4. Writing the outline of the report
5. Writing the actual report
6. Editing and revising the report.

The Format of the Report

Most reports have at least three and sometimes four parts. These include: Introduction, Body, Conclusion, and Recommendations. The introduction should state the subject and the purpose of the report. It may also include any background information that is necessary for the reader to follow the report. The introduction is often a good place to refer briefly to any conclusions that may be drawn. In the body of the report, the writer must include a clearly organized account of the subject of the report, e.g. the results of the survey carried out, an account of the fire in the factory and the damage to life and property.

The conclusion of the report contains a summary of the findings and their significance.

Finally, in the recommendations are included any suggestions that the writer may make-based on the facts of the situation. The recommendations indicate any practical course of action that may be taken. These are often the most important part of the report, and their adoption or rejection depends on how they are presented.

PRONUNCIATION

These are some of the words which occur in the unit. Listen how these words are pronounced. Now practice saying the words:

- A.
 1. Product
 2. Accounts
 3. Problem
 4. Purchase
 5. Research
 6. Dispatch
- B.
 1. Employee
 2. Organise
 3. Department
 4. Develops
 5. Customer
 6. Marketing

SUMMARY

In our professional life, we often have to work in teams, perhaps take up the leadership of a team. In this unit, we tried to give you linguistic competence in managing various levels of the organization, participating as a team member as well as a and a leader.

Review Question

Q1-What is The Role of a Manager?

Q2-What is Modals?

Q3-What are the Steps in Writing Reports?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Adelstein, M.E. and Sparrow, W.K. (1983) **Business Communications**. New York:

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UNIT 6

MEETINGS

Meetings

Notes

CONTENTS

- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Warm up
- ❖ Reading: A Successful Meeting
- ❖ Speaking: One to One Meetings
- ❖ Language Focus: Opening, Middle and Close
- ❖ Study Skills: Editing
- ❖ Listening: Criteria for Successful Meetings
- ❖ Vocabulary
- ❖ Grammar: Reporting Verbs
- ❖ Writing: Memos
- ❖ Pronunciation: Stress According to Part of Speech
- ❖ Summary
- ❖ Suggested Readings

OBJECTIVES

Conducting or participating in meetings is an important business skill. In this Unit you will learn

- about formal and informal meetings
- about the process of business meetings
- the role of the chairperson and participants
- how to express your ideas and views
- how to make suggestions,
- how to express agreement and disagreement
- how to write agendas, and follow up memos
- to practice the language of meetings

WARM UP

Have a look at these pictures which suggest two kinds of meetings. What do you think are the major differences between the two kinds of meetings? Write down at least three possible differences.

Match your points on the differences in the two kinds of meetings with the one's given below:

Group meetings are generally more formal than one to one meetings.

Group meetings are more structured and planned and generally last longer.

They involve a large number of people and must be chaired by somebody.

They also follow the procedure of agenda and minutes, which may not be the case with one to one meetings.

However, one to one meetings are not chance conversations but meetings with a purpose where certain objectives need to be achieved. Hence some kind of planning also needs to be done for such meetings to ensure the desired outcome.

The language of group meetings is also more formal than one to one meetings.

READING: A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

The passage that follows tells you how to have meetings that are both effective and fruitful.

Read the following passage and discuss the questions that follow.

How can you make Meetings work for you?

Meetings are central to most organizations for people need to take decisions based on shared information and opinions. How well you present yourself and your ideas, and how well you work with other people is crucial to your career.

Conducting a Meeting

Call a meeting only when it is essential and be very clear about its purpose. Meetings called on a routine basis tend to lose their point. If you are sure you need to call a meeting, circulate a memo several days in advance, specifying the time, place and objectives, issues to be discussed, other participants and preparation expected.

Meetings should be short, not more than an hour. Six is the optimum number of participants for a good working meeting. Larger meetings can be productive as brainstorming sessions for ideas, provided participants can speak freely without feeling they will be judged.

A successful meeting always leads to action. Decisions should take up the bulk of the minutes of the meeting, including the name of the person delegated to each task, and a deadline for its completion. Make sure you circulate the minutes after the meeting and then again before the next one.

Meetings

Draw out quieter members of the group. Encouragement helps create a relaxed and productive atmosphere.

Attending the Meeting

Even if the meeting is informal, it is always advisable to prepare a few key points in note form to put across or discuss. Don't memorize notes or read them out like a sermon. This inhibits your natural gestures: the eye contact and body language is essential for effective communication. If you cannot answer a question don't be afraid to say you don't know.

Phrase your criticisms and proposals positively. Try to offer solutions rather than to complain.

SPEAKING: ONE TO ONE MEETINGS

Arranging to Meet

Listen to this conversation where two persons are making an arrangement for a meeting. Pay special attention to the underlined expressions which highlight the language used in such situations. Say them aloud for practice.

A. How about meeting at The Moti Mahal?

B. That should be fine. What time?

A. What about after the conference?

B. Would you like to meet for dinner?

A. That would be great. I suggest that I come and pick you up from Pragati Maidan.

B. Let's say 7 pm.

A. Good idea. See you at 7 then. Bye.

B. Bye.

LANGUAGE FOCUS: OPENING, MIDDLE AND CLOSE

Here is a commonly used method of opening meetings along with some standard / formulaic language:

Opening a Meeting: The 4 step method

Step 1: Open the meeting. Tell everybody that you are going to begin

Step 2 : Explain the objectives.

- Tell them why you are having the meeting
- Thank you for coming.
- It's ten o'clock. Let's start.
- OK, shall we begin?
- Right then, can we get started?

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Step 3: Present the agenda. Tell them in order what you are going to discuss.

- We're here today to discuss.....
- What we want to do today is reach a decision..
- Our aim is to.....
- The purpose of this meeting is to.....
- On the agenda you'll see there are three items.
- Have you all seen a copy of the agenda?
- I suggest we take the next item on the agenda.

Step 4: Get initial contributions. Ask someone to begin the discussion.

- I'd like to ask Sunidhi to.....
- Can we hear from Mr Bakshi.....
- Can we have Ms Verma tell us about.....

Middle and close of a meeting

Here is a language checklist which you can use in a meeting:

Stating an opinion

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It seems to me.....

In my view.....

I tend to think.....

It's obvious that.....

I believe.....

Clearly.....

Asking for an opinion

Interrupting

Could we hear from.....

What do you think about.....

What's your view?

Any comments?

Excuse me, may I ask for a
clarification on this.....

If I may interrupt.....

Sorry to interrupt but.....

Handling Interruptions

Yes, go ahead.....

Sorry, please let him finish.....

Can I come to that later, please.....

That's not really relevant at this stage.....

Moving the discussion on

Can we go on to think about.....

Let's move on to the next point.....

Now we come to the question of.....

Closing the Meeting

I think we've covered everything.....

So we've decided.....

Communication skills

I think we can close the meeting now.
That's it then. The next meeting will be.....

Notes

Expressing Agreement/Disagreement

During meetings you often express **Agreement** or **Disagreement**. Here is language that could help you do so more appropriately.

Agreement	
<i>STRONG</i>	NEUTRAL
<i>I'm in complete agreement</i>	<i>I agree</i>
<i>I quite agree</i>	<i>You're right there</i>
<i>I couldn't agree more</i>	<i>I think you're right</i>
<i>Yes definitely</i>	<i>Yes and.....</i>
<i>Exactly</i>	<i>That's true....</i>
<i>Precisely</i>	<i>That's right.....</i>

Disagreement	
STRONG	NEUTRAL
<i>I disagree completely.</i>	<i>I don't agree.</i>
<i>That's out of the question.</i>	<i>That's not how I see it.</i>
<i>I wouldn't say that at all.</i>	<i>I wouldn't say that.</i>
<i>Of course not.</i>	<i>I think you are wrong.</i>
<i>That's ridiculous.</i>	<i>I disagree.</i>

Role Play

Work with a friend or by yourself to complete these short dialogues. Take it in turns to read the first statement and to reply according to the instructions.

- I think the report is too long. (disagree strongly).
- It's too late to make any changes. (agree).
- I feel we all need to work together. (agree strongly)
- In my opinion, we need to cut down expenses on entertainment. (disagree)
- We must wait till next year to start this project. (disagree, state the opposite opinion)

STUDY SKILLS: EDITING

Whenever you write a piece of text, it is always important to edit what you read. You may say of course we do that. But what do you think we must be careful about? We must be careful about mistakes of grammar, spelling, punctuation and so on. In the text below we have extrapolated some extra words in the text. Your knowledge of grammaticality should help you spot them. The text below is about Meetings. There are 9 lines out of which six contain mistakes: an extra word in the line. Find the extra words. Cross them out and write them in the column on the right. Put a tick mark for the lines that have no extra words. The first two lines have been done for you as examples.

- Let's look at the diary for today. I see we've got a teleconference meeting
- This morning. What's happened to good old fashioned meetings, with _____
- Everyone in the same room only discussing things. With all the hot-desking _____
- that goes on in offices these days, not to be mention companies outsourcing _____
- work out, soon we'll never meet our colleagues at all! I can't imagine though _____

vi. That we'll be able to do without business lunches, however well e-commerce _____

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vii. Takes off. I see we're lunching along with some clients today. That shouldn't _____

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viii. be too bad. The boss may be a tough guy, but he is also a bit of a foodie lover, _____

ix. So we'll probably go to a nice restaurant. _____

2. Find the meanings of these words in the dictionary. Some of these words are new and you might find them more easily on the web. If you still have problems, have a look at the answer key but only after you have been unsuccessful with the other resources.

i. teleconference

ii. hot-desking

iii. Outsourcing

LISTENING CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

You were taught to **read** and **write** in school. But did you ever have a listening comprehension class? Most of you would say 'no'. **Listening comprehension** has indeed been a neglected area in English language teaching. Teachers have imagined that we just pick up 'listening' in the course of our student life. But don't you think that you would have been better off if you had been trained? It is never too late! Let us practice the skill of listening. This would help us in our overall proficiency in the language.

Read the questions given below. Listen to the tape carefully and make notes as you read. Listen to it again and complete your notes. Spend some time completing your answers. Do they match with those given at the end of the unit?

VOCABULARY

Confidence in a language is often a result of having a large vocabulary. And confidence leads to fluency. In each unit, we have given you several exercises in vocabulary development. Do complete them carefully, and use these words in real life.

GRAMMAR: REPORTING VERBS

1. Reporting Verbs

Reporting what was said

When you write minutes of a meeting, it is useful to report the ideas, rather than every sentence. To do this, you need to use a variety of reporting verbs.

Here is a list that you might find useful:

CA : 'I think we should raise the budget.'

CA **suggested** raising the budget.

MB : 'I assure you I will find out more.'

MB **promised** to find out more.

RJ : 'It might be possible to arrange extra funds.'

RJ **mentioned** the possibility of extra funds.

DM : 'I am not so sure if there will be extra funding'.

DM **wondered** if there would be extra funding.

Here are some more examples of the use of reporting verbs while writing or speaking about a meeting.

Three issues were **discussed**.

It was **decided** to delay action until the next meeting.

Communication skills	Everyone agreed to the proposal.
	The issue of salary was brought up .
Notes	The Sales Manager reported on the results of the trade fair.
	Five strategies were recommended .
	SB explained the reason for the delay.
	Can you report the following statements? You may invent the names of the speakers. The first one is done for you as an example.
	i. "The report will definitely be in by tomorrow."
	Ans: Mr Singhal assured us that the report would be in by the next day.
	ii. "What are the sales figures of last week?"
	iii. "You still haven't gathered the feedback from your department. Please do so by the end of the week."
	iv. "The delegation is expected to arrive next week."
	v. "Is it necessary to make the scheme compulsory for all employees?"
	vi. "I don't think the new flexi-timings are acceptable to all our employees."
	vii. "Why don't we ask an advertising agency to design our campaign?"
	viii. "Can someone give me an update on the progress of construction work at our new site?"
	ix. "I am not happy with the people coming late for the meeting."
	x. "Can I see the absentee record of the Sales department?"
	xi. "It is absolutely essential to dispatch the goods this weekend."
	xii. "We have gained two important clients through the Trade Fair."

WRITING: MEMOS

A very important customer is going to visit your city for a weekend. You need to prepare for his visit. He is visiting your city for the first time. Imagine that a meeting has been held to discuss the issue on the basis of the agenda given below.

AGENDA

1 Hotels

! Which hotel should you reserve? Why? Who should make the reservation?
How can you make sure that his stay is comfortable?

2 Airport

! Who should meet the visitor at the airport?

3 Lunches and dinners

! Where should you take your visitor for lunch and dinner? Should you check first to see what kind of food he likes?

4 Entertainments

! Where should you take him in the evenings?

5 Gifts

! What kind of gift should you buy him? When should you give it to him?

6 Welcome letters

! What advice would you give him about your city and visit by way of helping him to prepare for his visit.

7 AOB – Any Other Business

The Minutes of the Meeting are also given. We will discuss Minutes in detail in the next Unit. Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 June 2003 to plan for Mr. Sampath's visit to the city

The Following members were present:

Mr. Dinesh Mehra

Mr. Vikas Puri

Ms. Deepti Sinha
Ms. Harvinder Kaur
Mr. Joseph Stephen
Ms. Salma Sheikh
Ms. Shilpa Gupta

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Mr. Sunil Rawat could not attend the meeting as he was on leave.

Mr. Sampath's visit was discussed in detail and the following decisions were taken.

Hotel Reservation: Mr. Vikas Puri will book accommodation for Mr. Sampath at the Park Royal hotel in Nehru Place.

Airport: Vikas will also receive the guest at the airport and bring him over to the hotel personally.

Meals: On 1st July he will have lunch with the MD at 1 pm at Park Royal and on 2nd July the GMs will have lunch with him at the Taj. We will fix up dinner for the two days of his visit according to his preference and convenience. Ms. Deepti Sinha will take care of this

Entertainment: Since this is Mr. Sampath's first visit to Delhi, it was presumed that he might be interested in sightseeing and shopping. Deepti and Vikas will arrange for the tour and accompany him

Writing Memo

Before you write the Memo, we will show you the format of the Memo, its functions and chief characteristics.

As the dictionary definition states, a memo is a message in writing sent by one person or department to another 'within the same business organization'. This is the reason why a memo is sometimes also described as an **inter-office memo**: a message sent from one office to another (of the same company).

Memos are used for a variety of purposes: from making a brief announcement to submitting or circulating an in-house (=within the organization) report. Among the main uses of the memo as a carrier of internal messages are the following:

Making announcements, requests, policy statements, notices, reminders, suggestions, acknowledgements, congratulations, informal invitations, thank you's, etc.

Confirming decisions arrived at (or points settled) face to face meetings or telephone conversations with colleagues, workers, etc.

For submitting or circulating in-house reports, e.g., preliminary survey reports, progress reports, recommendation reports, investigation reports, evaluative reports, and so on. Such memos may run to several pages and use the convention of formal reports like headings, graphics, tables, appendices, etc.

These purposes, for which memos are mainly used, can be seen as falling into the following functional categories:

1. **To inform:** Announcements, policy statements, notices and reports fall in the category. No immediate response is required, but the receivers are expected to note the information and conform to its requirements in their future behaviour, wherever applicable.

2. **To elicit a quick and definite response:** Suitably drafted memos can help elicit quick and definite responses where requests or notices are involved.

3. **To confirm the decisions/conclusions** arrived at a face to face meeting, or in a telephone conversation, and to create a permanent record of the decisions/conclusions.

Style of Memos

As one of the main instruments of communication at the workplace, workaday memos have gradually evolved a distinctive style. They are written by persons in a hurry for persons who are probably in a greater hurry. Hence, an ideal memo should reveal its message to the reader at one quick glance. What is even more important is that the **memo should have an appearance** which will tell the receiver that it can be read quickly. If, for example, the memo looks like several paragraphs of closely typed English prose, it is likely to be put aside to be read later or not read at all. So, if your memo is not a report, **make it brief** and **make it look brief**. Given below is the format of a memo.

MEMORANDUM		Date: 19/5
From: MD		
TO: Managers (Sales, Prod, Fin, Exp., Q.C.)		
SUBJECT: Export batch No. DO-9951 (To Indonesia)		
Matra Importers, Jakarta, have informed us that the last batch of scooters exported to them has the following problems:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No rear-view mirrors have been supplied though they were included in the order • Base plates of 32 scooters were found to be loose • 32 scooters have been supplied in sports grey colour though this colour was not included in the order • 16 scooters had no tool kits. 		
Please come to my office at 11 am tomorrow to discuss the matter. I will expect the concerned managers to bring with them explanations as well as remedies.		

To Sum Up:

1. Get to your main message directly.
2. Cut out every sentence, in fact every word, that does not contribute to your message.
3. Make your sentences short and simple.
4. Always think of the reader's time
5. State your 'subject' very precisely
6. Itemize the points
7. Pay attention to the Layout

PRONUNCIATION: STRESS ACCORDING TO PART OF SPEECH

Look at the following words which can be used both as nouns and verbs. The stress falls on the first syllable if it is a noun and the second if it is a verb. Now listen to the audio cassette and countercheck your pronunciation.

For example

Noun	Verb
Increase	increase

Can you mark the stresses in the following words and read them out aloud:

Noun	Verb
Present	present
Export	export
Record	record
Import	import
Desert	desert
Decrease	decrease
Progress	progress
Refund	refund
Process	process

Meetings

Notes

SUMMARY

In this unit, through various activities and exercises, we have guided you through the following aspects of meetings:

- the difference between formal and informal meetings
- the format of meetings
- the formulaic language which is required for opening, middle and closing of meetings
- criteria for a successful meeting (a listening activity)

In the Grammar section, we give you practice in **reporting verbs** which are required when you write minutes of meeting.

As a follow up to a meeting, we may have to write a memo to the staff. We have given you the format and style of a memo. We have also given you practice in writing a memo.

Review Question

Q1- What do you mean by a successful meeting?

Q2-What are the listening criteria for successful meetings?

Q3- What is memos?

Q4-What is the different Style of Memos?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Jones, L and Alexander R, Comfort, J. 1996. Effective Meetings. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

New International Business English. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sweeney, S. Communicating in Business. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

UNIT-7 TAKING NOTES & PREPARING MINUTES

CONTENTS

- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Taking Notes
- ❖ The Note-taking Skill: The Essential Components
- ❖ The Note-taking Skill: An Example
- ❖ Preparing Minutes
- ❖ Format of Minutes
- ❖ Language and Style of Minutes
- ❖ Grammar: Using the Passive Voice
- ❖ Summary
- ❖ Suggested Readings

OBJECTIVES

Our objectives in this unit are that after you have worked through it you should be able to

- take notes at meetings where the subject matter is familiar to you, using active listening and
- correct note-taking techniques
- convert the notes into minutes, using the format, language and style proper to formal minutes

Get hold of two minutes of meetings, either from your own office or someone else's office. Read them carefully and

a) Write your impressions of the minutes in terms of format, coverage, language and style.

b) Make corrections wherever necessary.

It would be a good idea to work with a partner – either a friend or a colleague at the Study Centre.

INTRODUCTION

All formal Meetings require that a written record of the meetings – of the discussions held and decisions reached – be prepared and kept on record. This is obviously necessary since if no such record is available disputes can later arise about what exactly was said or decided at the meeting. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise that certain meetings, like Annual General Meetings and meetings of Board of Directors of companies, are required by law to keep the minutes of their proceedings. Even non-formal meetings, like a face-to-face meeting of two officials of a company, may find it necessary to keep at least an informal record of their decisions in the form of a memo. There are several good reasons for this. For example, failure to keep a record of a verbal warning to a subordinate may stall any future disciplinary action against him/her; failure to record which person was decided upon to take which action may make it impossible to fix responsibility in case of a future foul-up. Apart from such considerations, records of meetings also help other people, who need to know but are not

required to be present at the meeting, to find out what went on at the meeting.

For these aims to be achieved, it is necessary that the report of the meeting be correct and factual not only in recording the decisions taken, resolutions passed, votes cast in favour or against a resolution, etc. but also in reporting the discussion wherever this is required. In fact, the reporter is less likely to get the factual data wrong than the emphases and biases manifested during the discussion, since there is more scope for disagreement in reporting the latter. To ensure that no inaccuracies in reporting go undetected, the minutes are always presented before the committee at its next meeting for its approval.

The person who records the minutes, therefore, has a serious responsibility. S/he is usually the secretary of the organization, but at informal meetings the Chairperson can request any member to record the minutes. Whoever records the minute's needs to possess the skill of note taking, for all that s/he can do at the meeting itself is to jot down notes on the proceedings. Later, s/he will convert these notes into proper minutes. This means expanding the notes into the language of minutes and putting the whole thing in the minute format. Both stages are equally important. If the notes are incorrect or inadequate, this will be reflected in the minutes, if the format or the language is faulty, again the minutes will be unacceptable.

That is why we have divided this unit into two parts: Note-taking and Preparing Minutes. We will take up note-taking first.

TAKING NOTES

When you are reading a textbook, or a reference book, especially when you are preparing for an exam, or are planning to write a paper, you make notes. You make notes because you later want to be able to recover the information without having to go back to the book again. The notes are in your own handwriting, and often in a coded form for your own use, and it is difficult for anyone else to recover the information from your notes. You use the code to jot down the important points in an abbreviated and compressed form to save time in copying the entire text. You also use coded symbols, like arrows of different sorts, numbers and letters, trees and rough diagrams, etc. to capture the information.

You have to do something similar when you are listening to various speakers at a meeting. The only difference is that here you make notes from something spoken, rather than from something written. This difference is often expressed by contrasting **note-taking** with **note-making**. You **make notes** from written texts (books, journals, etc.), but you **take notes** from a spoken text (like a speech). In recording the proceedings of a meeting, the skill we need is accordingly that of note-taking.

The Note-taking Skill: The Essential Components

The first essential sub component of the note-taking skill is the listening ability. Just as you cannot **make notes** unless you have the reading ability, you cannot **take notes** unless you have the listening ability. By listening ability we do not simply mean the ability to listen, just as by reading ability we do not mean simply the ability to read. A fifth class student can read, and a kindergarten child can listen, but, even with excellent writing skills, they cannot make or take notes. This is because for making or taking notes you need to be able not only to **understand** but also to **interpret** what you

Communication skills	read/hear. You must not only read and listen attentively to understand everything, you must also read and listen actively to be able to interpret it.
Notes	<p>By active reading and active listening, we mean the ability to grasp the points, to distinguish the main points from the supporting points, to make the implicit points explicit in your understanding and to place each point at its correct place in the entire structure of argument/discussion. There is a difference between listening attentively and listening actively. Attentive listening is mostly passive. You simply imbibe the information you hear e.g., when you are listening to the news on the radio or TV as an average citizen. You tuck away the information in separate chunks in different corners of your mind, and piece them together in a master design only when you are required to do so, or not at all. In active listening, your brain is making a constant effort to see the overall design, to light up the connections between the disparate points, and to see the deeper implications of the things said. Obviously, an active listener also needs to be attentive, but s/he needs to be more than attentive: s/he needs to be thinking actively on what s/he is hearing. It is for this reason that a note-taker should not be burdened with any other duty at the meeting. At some meetings, the Chairperson decides to record the minutes him/herself. This should be avoided.</p> <p>An important question that each note-taker at a meeting faces is when to start noting down what the speaker is saying. Different speakers have different styles. Some speakers start with an introduction and progress slowly to their main point; others start by demolishing the arguments of the previous speakers before coming to their own; for some others, speaking is a process of thinking aloud, and so on. If you wait till the main argument of a speaker becomes clear before you start taking down notes, you may find that you have waited too long and there isn't enough time to complete your notes as the speaker has concluded and another one has already started speaking. If you start taking down early what a speaker is saying, you might later discover that was just an introduction (and therefore not important), or that the speaker was only describing a position which s/he later went on to change. This is the essential difference between making and taking notes. When making notes from a book, you have the entire text before you: you can go back and forth at a leisurely pace, decide what the writer's main argument is, and then start making your notes. But when you are taking notes from a speech, the speech unfolds before you linearly in time, and what has been spoken is no longer available to you (except in your memory), so how do you make sure that you aren't too early or too late?</p> <p>There are two ways in which this problem can be tackled, though eventually every note-taker has to find his/her own strategies to deal with it. First, the note-taker must, from the very start, listen for the speaker's main point. This is usually a well-formed position, or viewpoint, related to the problem at hand. So long as the speaker does not start making positive observations about the issue in a confident and assured manner, it is too early to start taking down anything: she may only be describing other people's positions, or thinking aloud. Once s/he starts making positive observations confidently, it means s/he has formulated her/his position, or argument. It would be recognizable as different from any other positions already taken, and as soon as this realization occurs, the note-taker can start jotting down the point. Sometimes the speaker also makes it clear that she is now going to state</p>

her/his position. After this point, it would still take the speaker some time to complete her/his presentation and the note-taker will have enough time to take full notes. But if s/he waits for the speaker to complete her/his presentation, and round off her/his position in its totality, the note-taker will find herself/himself caught between two speakers. The second technique, which must supplement the first one, is the use of codes when jotting down the point. Trying to take down everything in longhand would simply take too long. So, use abbreviations, shortened and syncopated words, pictographs, symbols, arrows and the like to capture the sense as quickly as possible. (We shall illustrate some of these below.) This will help you to keep pace with the speaker. But return to the notes as quickly as possible after the meeting for decoding, or you might forget what the codes stand for.

The second essential of the note-taking skill is that the note-taker should enjoy **thorough familiarity with the subject matter** under discussion. S/he should understand what is being talked about. Both the context and the content of the debates should be known to her/him fully. Only then can s/he take notes of the subject matter comfortably and intelligibly.

Finally, a note-taker needs to be able to jot down the points s/he decides are important in precise and compressed forms. This is essentially a question about **the ability to select key words and phrases to represent the meaning and to use coded symbols to represent relationships.**

Let us now try to illustrate the points we have made above with the help of an example so that you can understand how these principles work in practice. We must of course work within the limitation that the example cannot be a live meeting but must be a transcript of a meeting. While this does affect the utility of the example to some extent, you should at least be able to see what is meant and how to extend the principles to a live meeting when you face one. We have provided you with a tape script and it is better if you listen first and then read the extract of the meeting.

The Note-Taking Skill: An Example

Given below is an extract from a meeting. The item under discussion relates to a proposal to increase the efficiency of the company by revamping its budgetary control system. We would like to see how the components of the note-taking skill we have described above will help us in taking notes of this extract. And to make sure that we 'take' notes and not 'make' notes, we will treat the extract as a linear one and will be guided only by the clues as they are produced and not all of them together. (Do listen to the tape which contains the extract) To do this task satisfactorily, we should be able to answer these questions.

1. What would active listening yield in this extract which mere attentive listening would not?
2. At what point should the note-taker start taking notes?
3. What advantage would someone who is familiar with the subject matter have over one who isn't?
4. What should be the language of the notes? What kind of codes or symbols could be used?

THE EXTRACT CHAIRPERSON: The next item on the agenda is a proposal from the Finance Manager regarding budgetary control. Would you please introduce the item and tell us what it is all about, Mr. Malhotra?

Communication skills	FM: Yes, Mr. Chairperson. As the Board is aware, the Company had last year commissioned a study of our financial management by Financial Consultants Ltd. They submitted a report which was put before the Board earlier this year. The Board had then asked me to prepare a proposal based on its suggestions about budgetary control, while the other aspects of the report would be taken up for implementation later. The detailed proposal is already with you, and I shall only highlight its main features. What the proposal essentially suggests is that we should do the Company's accounts more frequently.
Notes	<p>MEMBER 1 : But we are already doing the accounts every quarter, aren't we?</p> <p>FM : Yes, but quarterly accounts don't allow us to keep a close enough control. Should the company suddenly make a heavy loss we ought to be able to act quickly. If we don't, say the consultants, we will not be able to prevent the loss from getting larger still.</p> <p>Member 1 : But if the accounts show that we are making a loss, we immediately reduce inventory, that is, we cut down purchases, and, if possible, we reduce personnel.</p> <p>Chair: I think it would be a good idea if we first let Mr. Malhotra complete his presentation. Members can then make their points.</p> <p>FM: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. What Mr. Shukla says is true, but in order to do the things he suggests, we need the information faster than we are getting it at the moment. If profitability goes downthat is profits in relation to capital employed...it may be necessary to raise prices, cut costs and so on. But the right information must be quickly available.</p> <p>Chair: Let's have the proposal, Mr. Malhotra.</p> <p>FM: What the proposal suggests is that we break down the activities of the company into Cost Centres. Each Cost Centre would have its own finance manager of the rank of an assistant Finance manager. Each AFM would be required to forecast, well in advance, the income and expenditure of his centre. We would then put the budgets from all the centres together. After they have been approved, they become the annual budget of the company. If the actual income or expenditure of a Cost Centre varies a lot from the budgeted figure, then the AFM of that Centre would be responsible and would have to explain why his actual figures differed from his forecast, and take appropriate action. Each AFM would prepare monthly accounts and keep track of the income and the expenses. These would be monitored by the Central Finance Office (CFO). In case a decline in sales is noticed, the CFO would then be in a position to set the alarm bells ringing, and the counter measures could be initiated straightaway. In outline, this is the proposal. The details are given in the file that is already with you. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.</p> <p>Chair: Thank you, Mr. Malhotra. The members can now make their comments. Yes, Mr. Shukla.....?</p> <p>Let us now try to answer the questions that we posed above:</p> <p>1. Active listening consists mainly in being able to establish links between the different points that the speaker has made and to figure out the structure of main and subordinate points in the argument. It would be clear to the note-taker at the very start that the main point in the item is the proposal and the minutes must record the main features of the FM's proposal, s/he would be</p>

able to see the initial comments of the FM as providing the justification for the proposal, thus establishing a link between the two. There is a certain drawback in the existing system of budgetary control ("too slow") which the proposed system seeks to remedy. When the note-taker records the main features of the proposal, s/he would also try to record how this drawback is sought to be removed in the proposed system ("monthly accounting"). This means that s/he will already have understood the relationship between quicker accounting and a faster response to a heavy loss situation: quicker accounting will provide the company with faster feedback and it will be able to respond to the situation with quicker counter-measures. This and similar connections between the points made will reveal to the minute-reader that the minute-taker has listened actively and not just attentively.

2. Since the note-taker will have identified the FM's proposal as the main point of the item, his/her pen would start moving really fast only when the FM starts describing the proposal, that is, when the FM speaks for the last time. But s/he will already have noted down the reasons for change, which we have mentioned above. S/he will also have noted down already the item under discussion (FM's proposal on Budgetary Control) and the fact that the FM was only going to present the main features of the proposal. But s/he will get his/her clue that s/he must now start moving quickly when the Chairperson asks the FM to skip the preliminaries and get down to the proposal. That's when s/he must start writing furiously so that s/he can also finish writing when the FM stops speaking. Using code language, this should not be too difficult.

3. It should be obvious that a person who is familiar with the background to the matter under discussion would be in a better position to decide what is to be included in the minutes and what can be safely excluded. For example, a note-taker who knows that the members are aware of the present frequency of accounting would not have to be told about it in the minutes, even though it is mentioned at the meeting by a member. To take another kind of example, a person who didn't know what budgetary control was, or had no idea of what inventory reduction was, would remain in doubt whether s/he was right in omitting one or the other from the minutes.

4. As we have said earlier, the language of the notes should be abbreviated, compressed and coded. The reason is simply that, unless one knows shorthand, trying to take notes in full language forms will only mean that you are unable to cover everything you want to cover. The following devices can be used:

- i. Standard abbreviations (Jan., Feb., Co., etc.)
- ii. Non-standard abbreviations: (prop. = proposal; CC: Cost Centre); b. = budget; inc. = income, etc.)
- iii. Standard symbols, e.g., = : 'is equal to', < = 'less than', > = 'greater than', != 'since', "= 'therefore', etc.
- iv. Non-standard symbols e.g., # = 'cause of', :\$ = 'result of', %= 'falls, declines, &= 'rises, grows'.
- v. Syncopated words: y'ly - 'yearly', m'ly = 'monthly', edu'nl = 'educational'
- vi. Sentence fragments: e.g., 'more frequent accounting', 'CFO to monitor', etc.

Communication skills	<p>We give below one possible set of notes which show how the symbols and abbreviations etc could be used:</p>
Notes	<p>Item: FM's prop on budg. Control FM: Main features only Ess: more frequent accounting qtrly acc. Not quick enough to start prev. meas. ICO heavy loss. Faster f.b.ess. PROP. Divide co. into CCs Each CC under an AFM AFM to forecast inc. & expend. of CC Aggreg. Of CC budgets = Co. budget AFM resp. ICO sharp variation from budg. Est. AFM to prepare m'ly acc. CFO to monitor</p> <p>This note taker makes use of some abbreviations which possibly s/he alone can interpret, but this is no problem because normally no one else would be required to decode them, at least not without help from him/her. In fact, anyone who was present at the meeting would not have a serious problem interpreting them. Nevertheless, here are the explanations.</p> <p>ess. : essential qtr'ly. : quarterly acc. : accounting, accounts f.b. : feedback CC : Cost Centre inc. : income expend : expenditure aggreg. : aggregate ICO : in case of resp. : responsible m'ly : monthly prev.meas. : preventive measures budg. : budget, budgetary est. : estimate</p> <p>That the note-taker has listened actively is reflected in the notes. For example, his/her summary of the justification 'Quarterly accounting not quick enough to start preventive measures in case of heavy loss' shows that s/he has understood the point well enough to express it in his/her own words. The use of the word 'feedback' further confirms the point.</p> <p>Chair : Attention, Ladies and Gentlemen! It's 10 am and everyone is here. Let's begun with the first item – the confirmation of the previous minutes. We have received no written comments, but if anyone has anything to say now, they are most welcome..</p> <p>ALL : No. They are fine.</p> <p>Chair : OK. In that case let's move on to the next item – exports to South East Asian markets. Mr. Mahajan, Manager, Export Sales will introduce the item. Mr. Mahajan?</p> <p>Mahajan : Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have already circulated my report to the members. I hope the members have had the time to go through it because I am really looking forward to their suggestions for improvement in what is at present a rather depressing picture. As the report says on the</p>

very first page, our exports to South East Asia have declined for the third year running. We have identified the reasons for this decline but are at the moment rather helpless, as the reasons seem to be beyond our control. We think there are three reasons for the decline: first, of course, is the growing competition from the local manufacturers. Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia have all in recent years set up, or are in the process of setting up, their own polyester plants. If we have still been able to sell them our product for so long it is because of the price advantage we have enjoyed so far, and of course because these countries have open economies. However, the price advantage we have so far enjoyed is now being progressively eroded by the inflation at home and the constant rise in wages. That is the second reason. But it is the third reason which has proved to be the most crippling in recent years, and it is the steep rise in the domestic tax rates. Manufacturers of polyester yarn have been representing to the government without much success. Recently the finance minister has given an indication that the tax rate may be reduced in the next year's budget. If that happens, we can look forward to some relief, though I cannot promise that that alone would be sufficient to achieve a turnaround in our sales to South East Asia.

Bagchi : Can we afford to wait that long? The next budget is still five months away.

Moreover, the quantum of relief may not be much. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to know how serious the situation is and whether we have thought of any counter measures to prevent the situation from getting worse.

Mahajan : Mr. Chairman, I quite agree with Mr. Bagchi. We cannot just sit and wait for February 29 for the Minister to announce a tax cut. Irrespective of what the government does, we have to take measures to arrest the declining trend in exports to these countries and to do that we must somehow or the other maintain our price advantage. The question is how to do it. Our technology is the best in the world, therefore there is not much we can hope to do there. The advantage provided by lower wages is being progressively neutralized, though we do still retain some advantage, as the comparative table on p.5 of the report shows. Then there are the high transportation costs. When the transportation costs are added to our wage costs, the wage-cost advantage is completely neutralized. Please see the chart on p.6. – the 80% tax comes on top of this. Compare this with the 15-25% tax in these countries. Is it surprising that we are losing our markets in these countries to the local manufacturers? In fact, if things continue to go the way they have been going, it is only a matter of time before we will have to withdraw from these markets completely. It may well happen three years from now by which time six more manufacturing plants will be going on stream in these countries. That is how serious the situation is, Mr. Chairman, and unless we take some urgent and drastic measures.....

Rahman : Yes, but what can we do? As you said, all the factors responsible for this situation seem to be beyond our control.

Mahajan : But neither can we just sit and watch our South East Asian markets being snatched away from us. They are our bread and butter. You know we don't export much to the west.

Chair: Well, gentlemen, you have heard the Export Manager. Are there any suggestions?

Communication skills	Bagchi : Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Export manager that none of the factors responsible for the present situation in the South East Asian markets is amenable to our control. In fact, I foresee a steep rise in inflationary pressures, and a further decline in the value of the rupee, both contributing to a rise in costs. Even if the tax rate is cut by the minister, it will never come down to anywhere near the low tax rates in these countries. In such a situation no half-hearted measures will show any results. We have to think bold, and be prepared to take risks, if we are going to survive.
Notes	Chair : What do you have in mind, Mr Bagchi? Bagchi : We must be prepared to take full advantage of the competitive situation now obtaining in the South East Asian countries, of their open policies and the low tax rates. With our experience in this field, and our technology, I am sure we can do far better than the new units coming up in these countries, if, and it's a big 'if', we move one of our plants to Thailand or Singapore. I know the initial cost will be high, but it will still be less than what the new local plants cost, imported as they all are from the US. Moreover, the higher rated capacity of our plant will mean quicker recovery of the cost. I think we ought to give a lot of urgent thought to this idea, since it seems to be our only road to survival. Chair : It certainly is a bold proposal, Mr Bagchi. Let's hear what other members have to say about it.....

PREPARING MINUTES

In the second stage, the notes taken at the meeting are converted into proper minutes. The minutes are prepared in a definite format, therefore it would not do simply to write out the notes in full sentences to arrive at proper minutes. The secretary, or whoever is to prepare the minutes, ought to be familiar with the format, and s/he should have a copy of the agenda before her/him.

This is because the minutes follow the agenda closely. Secondly, s/he should be familiar with the language used in the minutes, since there are certain conventions of language that formal minutes follow which are not followed in informal reports of meetings (e.g., newspaper reports of meetings). We shall discuss these two aspects of minute-writing: the **format of the minutes** and the **style and language** used in writing them.

The Format of Minutes

When the minutes are put in their final form the following information appears first and constitutes the **HEADING** of the minutes:

1. Name of the body; nature of the meeting; day, date, time and place of the meeting.

This information can occur in either of the following forms:

Minutes of the First Meeting of the Board of Directors of PASHUPATI EXPORTS held on 12 January, 2004 at 5.00 pm in the Board Room

OR

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON FLEXITIME
Minutes of meeting held on May 16, 2003 at 3.00 pm in Committee Room No.2**

The piece of information that is given next is the names of the people present with a specific mention of who chaired the meeting. This information is given in the following manner:

2. PRESENT: Pashupati Shah (MD, Chairperson)

Ram Malhotra (Manager, Exports)
Govind Gaitonde (Manager, QC)
Shalini Pande (Manager, Finance)
Malavika Chauhan (Manager, Marketing)
Bharat Mukherji (Manager, Domestic Sales)

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In informal meetings, names alone suffice: designations can be dropped. But minutes of formal meetings, particularly those which have to be sent to other organizations and agencies, must include the designations.

Information about people present is not complete without a separate mention of those who are not regular members of the committee but are present in a special capacity, e.g., the secretary, or those who have been specially invited to the meeting to assist the committee by virtue of their special expertise, e.g., an architect, an auditor, or a solicitor. This information is presented as follows:

3. **In Attendance :** Rajguru Gopal (Secretary)
or
Special Invitees Mohan Bagga (Architect)
Reshma Bajaj (Computer Consultant)

From this point onwards, the minutes will follow the agenda closely. The agenda has the following structure:

Title, date and place of Meeting
Apologies for Absence
Minutes of Previous Meeting
Matters Arising
Items for Discussion
Any Other Business with permission of the Chair
Date, Time and Place of the Next Meeting

The minutes pick up the agenda from the second item: Apologies for Absence, the first item having been already incorporated in the heading. Under this item the minute-taker reports any apologies for absence read out/announced at the meeting. The report takes the following form:

4. Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received from the following:

S. Bhatia
P. Ahluwalia

The next item in the minutes is **Minutes of Previous Meeting**, which are formally presented for confirmation at the meeting. In actuality, they are often circulated in advance so that members can read them and point out any discrepancies they notice at the meeting. If no discrepancies are pointed out at the meeting, the minutes are approved and signed by the Chairperson. In this case, the minutes record the item as follows:

5. Confirmation of Minutes: The minutes of the last meeting held on.....were confirmed and signed.

But if any amendments to the minutes are suggested and accepted, they are recorded as follows:

5a. Confirmation of Minutes: It was pointed out that Item 3 should read “.....a tax rate of 80%.....” in place of “.....a tax rate of 30%.....” with this amendment the minutes were confirmed and signed. The next item, **Matters Arising**, refers to any discussion, announcement, etc. that may have taken place at the meeting on a matter arising from the minutes of the previous meeting. The item is sometimes also utilized for

Communication skills reporting action on decisions taken at the previous meeting. The minutes record the matter in the following style:

Notes

6. Matters Arising:

(i) Manager (Domestic Sales) reported that the sales figures for the first quarter had been delayed due to computer breakdown but would be made available within a week.

(ii) Manager (Marketing) informed the members that M/s Media Advertisers had agreed to send a revised plan for the launch of the new line of polyproducts.

The matters so far covered by the minutes are format-related, though that does not reduce their importance. But the really important matters begin only when **Items for Discussion** are taken up. In our specification of the agenda, this represents a cover item, i.e. in an actual agenda, it may cover several different agenda items, each following the other with a different item number. The minutes for each item would appear separately following the order in which they appear in the agenda. For example, for the agenda of the meeting of the Board of Directors of PASHUPATI SCOOTERS which appears in 7.4.2, there will be four different items (Nos. 4,5,6,7) each to be minuted separately, as follows:

7. (Item 4) Invitation from the Ministry of Industry for participation in the rescue bid for SCOOTERS INDIA LTD.

(Minutes)

8. (Item 5) Proposal from Marketing for participation in AUTO EXPO 99 to be held in Milan in Jan.99.

(Minutes)

9. (Item 6) Report of the subcommittee on exports to South East Asia

(Minutes)

10. (Item 7) Review of product prices

(Minutes)

Discussion of some of the items at the meeting may end with some action being assigned to a particular member, or with a subcommittee being set up to do something. For example, in case of Item No.4, the meeting may decide to set up a subcommittee to draw up a set of conditions on which the company will join the rescue bid, or in case of Item No.5, it may assign to the Marketing manager the duty of inviting bids from some European marketing concerns for setting up a display of the company's products at the EXPO 99. **Whenever such an action is decided on with respect to a particular item, the minutes of the item end with a separate para highlighting the action to be taken.** Thus the entire minutes for Item No.4 may read as follows: **(Item 4) Invitation from the Ministry of Industry for participation in the rescue bid for SCOOTERS INDIA LTD.**

The MD informed the Board that the Ministry of Industry, GOI, was interested in preparing a rescue bid for saving the public sector concern, SCOOTERS INDIA Ltd., and had invited the company to join the bid and submit its terms. The MD felt that though company policy had been against getting involved in such matters, the invitation might also offer an opportunity to acquire a large facility which could be converted into another production base for two and three wheelers with substantial production capacity, provided favourable terms could be negotiated. After some discussion, the Board decided to accept the Ministry's invitation in principle,

but the acceptance would be confirmed only after the terms of participation had been approved by the Board.

Action: A subcommittee consisting of MD (Convener), Manager (Finance), Manager (Production), Manager (QC), Mr. Rohit Desai and Ms. Prema Nath will prepare the terms of participation and submit them for the Board's consideration by 30th September. The subcommittee can employ the services of such experts as it deems fit. We should however note the **ACTION** is added only when a specific action is recommended by the committee. Otherwise, a paragraph summarizing the discussion is sufficient. The summary of the discussion is of course based on the notes taken at the meeting and includes only the important points. If any proposals are presented at the meeting, their highlights are also included. Names of only those speakers are included who make important suggestions or contributions.

But in the **ACTION** part, names of persons responsible for the action, along with the dates by which the action is to be completed, should be stated clearly.

11. AOB (Any Other Business).

If any item is discussed under this heading, it is minuted in the usual way. The **ACTION** para is also added, if required. In the case of those committees which meet at regular intervals, the last item is

12. Date of the next meeting.

The minutes record the decision of the meeting in this regard.

Language and Style of Minutes

When converting notes into minutes, it is necessary not only to conform to the format of the minutes, but also to use the specific language in which minutes, specially minutes of formal meetings, are written. This language tends to be rather formalized and may remind you of the language of law, though actually it is not as formalized. But it does use certain types of grammatical constructions more frequently than others and shows preference for certain expressions and vocabulary items, which gives to it its special character. In this section, we will describe these special features of the language of the minutes.

Let us first look at some examples of the language of minutes. By looking at these examples closely, we will be able to discover the special features of which we have spoken above.

a) Manager (Exports) reported that sales to South East Asia had fallen for the third year running and there was urgent need to initiate measures to arrest this trend.

b) The problem of office security was raised by Mr. Dayal. He suggested that all important papers should be kept in a locked filing cabinet. It was agreed that only three people would have the key: Mr Dayal, Ms. Rohatagi and Mr. Jairam.

c) It was resolved that a subcommittee be set up to look into the causes of the decline in exports to S.E. Asia.

d) The minutes of the last meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

e) It is resolved that the Secretary be authorized to draw up the terms of participation in the joint bid.

f) The chairman referred to the sad demise of Mr. Sushobhan Sengupta and spoke of his services to the Company during its formative years.

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Communication skills	g) The updating of promotional literature to include the new models, PL 40 and PLS 30, was suggested by Mr. Jairam. He point out that many small changes had also been made to other models and these needed to be included in the promotional literature.
Notes	<p>h) Action: Mr. Jairam to update the promotional literature and to submit the drafts at he next meeting. Before we discuss these examples, let us first state what is required of the language of the minutes:</p> <p>A. The minutes represent a reliable record of the important things said, the decisions taken and the things done at the meeting.; the effort therefore should be to make the language simple, transparent, free from ambiguity, and precise so that everyone can understand the contents easily and in the same way.</p> <p>B. At meetings, the individual is less important than the collectivity. The decisions taken at meetings are collective decisions. Therefore the language used should be such that it does not assign decisions to individuals. Important suggestions and proposals can be ascribed to individual members, but the final decisions are always the collective responsibility.</p> <p>C. The minutes record the proceedings as briefly as possible. The language should therefore be concise.</p> <p>D. Finally, the minutes, being the official record of the meeting, are likely to be consulted and referred to by other agencies and institutions including the law courts in case of disputes. Their language therefore should conform to the standards of formality and impersonality that publicly used language generally requires.</p> <p>Let us now see how the example quoted above, (a-h), show the qualities that are required by the language of minutes.</p> <p>i. You will notice that the language used in all the samples above is simple and transparent in the sense that it can be easily understood. It does not use a literary or philosophical style, high-flown words, or poetic flourishes. The words used are common ones (except ‘demise’) and one doesn’t have to look up a dictionary to find out the meanings of any words. There are no double-meaning constructions or words, and the meaning comes through quite clearly. If there are some words that you don’t know (like ‘promotional’), that is an indication that some words common in the world of business are not yet known to you and you must learn them.</p> <p>ii. You must have noticed the frequency of verbs in the passive voice in the examples: was raised, was agreed, was resolved, was suggested, were read, and so on. As you may know, the passive form of the verb is used when we wish to avoid reference to the agent, either because the agent is not known, is indefinite, or simply because the individual agent is not important. The use of the passive form allows us to eliminate the agent. In writing the minutes, as we said above, reference to individual agents is minimized, since the responsibility is collective. The collective agent (‘committee’) does not need to be mentioned because it is so obvious. You will also notice that where the passive voice is used with an individual agent (as in ‘was suggested by Mr Jairam’) it would make no difference, in fact may even help to simplify the language, if the passive voice is replaced by the active. The use of the passive voice without the agent also helps the writer to make the minutes impersonal and objective as required in D above.</p>

iii. The examples above show some constructions which are not very common outside the language of minutes. For example:

a) It was resolved that a committee be set up to look into.....

b) Resolved that the Secretary is authorized to draw up the terms.....

c) Mr. Jairam to update the promotional literature and to.....

The use of constructions such as these, which are not in common use at all but are specific to the language of the minutes, gives to the minutes their formal flavour. This formal flavour is further supported and intensified by the use of more 'dignified' and literary equivalents of words in day-to-day use like 'demise' for 'death'. However, in keeping with the first requirement we placed on the language of the minutes, viz. that of simplicity, the current trend is against the use of such words and is in favour of using the day-to-day idiom as far as possible. But simplicity, it should be noted, does not conflict with the use of formalized constructions like the ones we have discussed above to report the proceedings in a precise and concise manner.

iv. Conciseness in minutes is achieved mainly by including only the major points and leaving out everything else. What is recorded in the minutes is

a. the main points of the discussion

b. resolutions moved, names of the proposer and seconder

c. recommendations made and decisions reached

d. results of voting

e. tasks assigned to individuals, subcommittees, etc.

This information is then presented using a style and a language in which no unnecessary words or ornamentation are used. Consider, for example, the following version of (g) above:

(G) Mr Jairam said that the promotional pamphlets, posters and brochures of the company had become out of date as they did not make any reference to the new models the company had brought out since 19..., viz PL 40 and PLS 30. The older models had also undergone modifications and changes which did not find a place in the pamphlets and brochures. Thus while the company was spending lot of energy and expense in updating its products, it was failing to communicate its achievements to the public. As a result, the increased research and development effort was not getting translated into increased sales of our products.

The main point of this argument is that the promotional literature of the company needs to be updated to incorporate the new products and changes to the old ones, and this is stated quite concisely in (g). (G) states the same thing in a very elaborate manner, which is quite inappropriate to the style of minutes.

Conciseness in minutes is also achieved at times by abbreviating a structure, as we saw above. Thus, in resolutions, '**It is resolved that.....**' Is abbreviated to '**Resolved that**' and, in the **Action** para, '**Mr. Jairam is (requested) to update the promotional literature.....**' is abbreviated to '**Mr Jairam to update.....**', so on.

Finally, minutes can also be made to **look** precise and well-organized by using some well known layout devices. Some of these which are applicable to minutes are the following:

(a) Each section of the minutes (**Heading, Present, In Attendance, Minutes of Previous Meeting**, etc.) is presented as a separate paragraph and

Communication skills	separated by blank double line space; section headings, including the headings of the agenda items to be given in bold letters.
Notes	<p>(b) In each section which has more than one item (e.g. Matters Arising may have three separate items), number the items and present each one as a separate paragraph.</p> <p>(c) Wherever there is an ACTION item, put it as a separate paragraph at the end of the relevant item with the heading ACTION.</p> <p>(d) In summarizing a discussion, try to itemise the contents. This helps to make the argument clear to you, while also helping the reader to see precisely what the points of the argument were. It also gives a systemized look to your minutes.</p> <p>Name of Company: PASHUPATI EXPORTS CORPORATION</p> <p>Body meeting: Board of Directors</p> <p>Nature of meeting: First meeting for the year 96-97</p> <p>Day, date, time: Monday, July 15, 11.00 am</p> <p>Place: Board Room at the Registered Headquarters at Nehru place, New Delhi</p> <p>Present: S. Bhogle (Chairperson)/R. Mahajan (manager, Exports)/S. Bagchi, V.Rahman, Shefali Ghosh, G.Ketkar, R. Prahlad (all directors)</p> <p>In attendance: You as Secretary</p> <p>Apologies: R. Mehta (Director)</p> <p>3. Draft resolutions on the following subjects to be placed before a committee:</p> <p>a) To appoint a subcommittee to suggest measures to reduce the air and water pollution by the Company's manufacturing plant at Renughat</p> <p>b) To appoint Dr. Lekh Raj and Mrs S. Lamba to the Board of Directors of Mahima Plastics Ltd.</p> <p>c) To authorize the Secretary to conduct negotiations with the Secretary of the workers union to withdraw the strike notice issued by it.</p> <p>4. Given below are verbatim (exactly as spoken) extracts from some meetings. Write summaries of these discussion extracts, as they would appear in the minutes of these meetings:</p> <p>a) Mrs Narain : I think the main reason why our sales have been going down in the north is that our agents in U.P., Rajasthan, Punjab and Bihar are ineffective. We need new agents there and I suggest our Sales Department find some quickly. We need to give top priority to this job.</p> <p>Manager (Sales) : I'm afraid I can't agree with Ms. Narain. It would be very, very unwise to change our agents at this point of time. Our competitors are on a sharp lookout for established and experienced agents, and they'd immediately grab our agents. On the other hand, we would be very hard placed to find new agents, because good agents are hard to come by. Even in normal times changing agents is very risky. It disturbs the market. Finding new agents takes time, and even if you succeed in finding new agents, you can never be sure they'll be better than the old ones.</p> <p>b) Chair: We must do something about our markets in the north. We are in danger of losing them completely.</p> <p>Manager: I assure the Board that I am aware of the problem. We are right now in the process of reorganising our sales network in the northern states. Where this process has been completed, the results are already beginning to show. In Punjab and H.P., for example, our sales are showing a rise this year.</p>

I am quite confident that U.P., Bihar and Rajasthan will also follow suit as soon as we have revived our sales network there.

c) Two companies are negotiating a takeover. HL is the representative of the company which is to be taken over, OL of the company which wants to take over HL's company.) HL: Before we can give our final consent to the takeover, we'd like to make sure of one more thing.

OL: And what is that?

HL: The interests of our loyal workers.

OL: Though we cannot commit ourselves at this moment, we can assure you we value the services of loyal workers very highly.

HL: Thank you for the assurance, Mr. Lal, but we'd like a more specific assurance. In short, we want a guarantee that no employee will lose his/her job as result of the takeover.

OL: I'm afraid it's impossible to give such a specific assurance, Mr. Lalvani. We are planning to reorganise and modernize the manufacturing units extensively, and it is quite likely that some staff will become redundant as a result.

HL: That, I'm afraid, jeopardizes the whole deal we have worked out. If the workers challenge the takeover in the court, we will be stuck for years.

OL: You needn't worry, Mr. Lal. We will work out a reasonable deal for the employees who are made redundant.

GRAMMAR: USING THE PASSIVE VOICE

Read the following sentences.

1. In case a decline in sales is noticed
2. The details are given in the file that is already with you.
3. Sales targets are set every year.....

As you can see from the examples, we use the passive in English if we don't want to draw attention to the person who is responsible for a particular action or process. In fact, the passive is very useful when you want to emphasize the object to which the action or process is happening rather than the person carrying out the action. So the passive is **used to focus on the action**.

Rewrite each sentence in the passive.

- i. We sent the goods last week, so you should receive them soon.
The goods **were sent** last week, so you should receive them soon.
- ii. We would reduce costs if the workers come on time.
- iii. We can master the new software easily in a couple of days
- iv. The customer should receive the consignment by Monday.
- v. According to a recent report the group is making similar investments in the USA.
- vi. We enclose the payment together with our order.
- vii. We will produce the body of the car at our Rampur factory.
- viii. The space now seems adequate; they have enlarged the premises since my last visit.
- ix. Large companies dominate the economies in many countries.
- x. Using better-trained staff can increase productivity.

SUMMARY

Notes

The main points of this unit are as follows:

- Minutes are written records of the proceedings of a meeting. They are useful as records of decisions, major discussion points, assignment of responsibilities, and for general informative purposes.
- To ensure correctness of minutes, they are taken on record only after approved by the body at its next meeting.
- Minutes are prepared from notes taken at the meeting. Hence note-taking is an important skill for the minute writer.
- Note-taking is different from note-making.
- The first important component of the note-taking skill is active listening. Active listening consists in being able to figure out the structure of main and subordinate points in a speaker's presentation and to establish connections between the different points the speaker makes.
- Note-taking is confined only to major points. A good note-taker knows when to start taking notes so that s/he does not miss anything important and does not end up with a collection of only inessential points.
- A good note-taker makes use of abbreviations, symbols and coded language to keep pace with the speaker.
- Only a person thoroughly familiar with the subject matter of the discussions can make a good note-taker.
- In converting the notes into minutes the minute-taker has to keep in mind (a) the format of the minutes and (b) the language and style of the minutes.
- The format of the minutes includes: Heading; Member Present; Chairperson; In Attendance;
- Apologies for Absence; Confirmation of Previous Minutes; Matters Arising; Items for discussion; Action Para; Any Other Business; Date of Next Meeting.

Review Question

Q1- Write about the Essential Components of Note-Taking Skill

Q2- What do you mean by Preparing Minutes

Q3-What do you mean by Language and Style of Minutes

Q4- What is Action?

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Hodgson, P. & Hodgson, J. (1993) Effective Meetings, London: Century Business.
2. Mack, A. (1970/1989) The Language of Business, London: BBC.
3. Rai, U. & Rai, S.M. (1989/1992) Business Communication, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House.

UNIT 8 PRESENTATION

SKILLS-I

Presentation Skills-I

Notes

Structure

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Reading: Presentation Skills
- ❖ Grammar: Verbs often required in Presentations
- ❖ Language Focus
- ❖ Listening: Importance of Body Language in Presentations
- ❖ Speaking: Preparing an Outline of a Presentation
- ❖ Pronunciation
- ❖ Summary

INTRODUCTION

Presentations are frequently used in business organizations and educational institutions for communicating ideas and information to a group. In this Unit you will learn how to make effective presentations. You will learn

- how to prepare for presentations
- hints on effective delivery
- preparing outlines of presentations
- use of a variety of presentation verbs
- use of signaling, signposting and listing techniques
- the importance of body language in presentations

WARM UP

When you give a presentation, **how** you deliver the information is just as important as **what** you say. Knowing your **subject** well and knowing your **audience** are both very important. But there are other considerations. Here are some of them. What is your opinion on these?

Can you add some more to the list?

Body language notes language confidence voice visual aids humour length speed

READING: PRESENTATION SKILLS

Presentation skills are absolutely essential in almost all work areas. In the business world presentations are made to clients, prospective buyers, business associates, seniors, colleagues and subordinates. These days presentations have also become part of the recruitment process. In order to be effective and impressive in your presentations you need to **prepare** the presentation before you actually **deliver** it. Even experts in communication need to plan and prepare their presentations in advance.

Look at these tips on Presentation skills and decide whether you would put them in **Preparation** or **Delivery**.

i) If you are not enthusiastic about what you say you cannot expect to generate interest amongst the audience; Adapt to response – don't stick to your plan necessarily. If you find that it is not working, alter it to adapt to the audience

ii) Check room, seating, acoustics, OHT or Computer (depending on what you decide to use). iii) Vary your tone and pitch. Ensure proper modulation.

Communication skills	Everything should not be said with equal amount of stress. Certain things need to be emphasized more than others.
Notes	<p>iv) Memorize your introduction. This will help you to sound confident and in control.</p> <p>v) Try to involve the audience and respond to their reactions</p> <p>vi) Keep your sentences short and simple. Use deliberate pauses to punctuate your speech</p> <p>vii) Never talk down or up to your audience. Treat them as equals, no matter who they are.</p> <p>viii) Whenever you make a really important point, pause and let the full significance of what you have said sink in.....before you move on.</p> <p>ix) Don't put boring tables of figures and long lines of text on the overhead projector and read them out.</p> <p>x) When showing a visual, keep quiet and give people time to take it in.</p> <p>xi) Welcome questions from your audience. When members of your audience ask you a question, it is usually because they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat questions as an opportunity to get your message across better.</p> <p>xii) Know the size and the knowledge level of your audience. You must not tell them what they already know.</p> <p>xiii) Be clear about the purpose of your presentation – is it to inform or to persuade.</p> <p>xiv) Key ideas should be emphasized – you must ensure that the importance of your key points is not lost because of over emphasis on sub points</p> <p>xv) Don't cram – if you have a lot of information to give you could consider giving some of it through handouts rather than cram all of it into your presentation.</p> <p>xvi) You must present an outline in the beginning of your presentation so that your audience knows how your presentation is structured. This should be well prepared in advance.</p> <p>xvii) Rehearse your presentation in order to time it, and to become familiar with names and figures as well as any complex information you need to give to the audience.</p> <p>xviii) Pay attention to your body language: eye contact; gestures; posture; movement.</p>

Preparation Delivery

ii) Check room, seating etc. i) Be enthusiastic

GRAMMAR: VERBS OFTEN REQUIRED IN PRESENTATIONS

Outlining Your Presentation

It is important to present an outline of your presentation at the very beginning. This helps the audience to understand how you have structured your presentation. A presentation will be much clearer to the audience if the structure is clearly signalled.

The use of a variety of **presentation verbs** can help you to present the outline clearly, specifically and effectively.

Here are some verbs often required in presentations. Can you complete the outlines of the presentations below by inserting suitable verbs from the box? You may need to use some of these twice. Talking discuss outline filling sharing bring highlight tell report start

i) Good morning everyone. I am Aditya Sen. This morning I am going to be _____ to you about the Adult Education project taken up by our Institution. So I'll begin by

Presentation Skills-I

_____ you in on the background of the project and then _____ you

Notes

up to date on the progress of the project. I'll go on to _____ what I see as the main achievements of the project.

Next I will _____ our plans for further extension of the project. In the end I will

_____ you how you can become a part of this project. Please feel free to interrupt me anytime with any questions you might want to ask.

ii) Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am here to _____ on the results of the market study of our new product in the western zone. I will begin with Mumbai which is our main domestic market in the west. I will then go on to Jaipur and Ahmedabad in that order. After _____ with you information on the data collected from these cities, I will _____ in depth the implications of this report. My presentation will be followed by an open discussion on our performance in the western zone.

Here are some more ways of signaling the structure of your presentation. Pay particular attention to the verbs in bold.

Introduction

Greeting Good morning ladies & gentlemen / everyone.....

Topic I'd like to **talk** to you about.....

I'd like to **say** a few words about.....

I'm here to **make** a presentation on.....

This morning I'm going to be **talking** to you about / telling you about / **showing**

you / **reporting** / taking a look at.....

Outline I'll be **dealing** with three areas.

I've divided my talk into.....

So I'll start off by **filling** you in on the background to / **bringing** you up-to-date on / **giving** you an overview of/ **making** a few observations about / outlining..... And then I'll go on to **discuss** in more depth / **highlight** what

I see as the main / **make** detailed recommendations regarding.....

I will conclude with..... / **I will end** my presentation with..... /

At the end of my presentation I **will invite** you to ask me any questions that you may have.

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Signposting

Signposts help to guide the audience through a presentation. Look at the phrases given below.

These will help you to guide your audience through a presentation.

- to move on to go back to summarize
- to expand on to recap to turn to
- to digress to conclude to elaborate on
- to illustrate
-

Check Your Progress 4

Choose one of the **signpost** expressions from above for the following situations:

- i. When you want to make your next point To.....
- ii. When you want to change direction To.....
- iii. When you want to refer to an earlier point To.....
- iv. When you want to repeat the main points To.....
- v. When you want to give a wider perspective To.....
- vi. When you want to give an example To.....
- vii. When you want to do a deeper analysis To.....
- viii. When you just want to give the basic points To.....
- ix. When you want to deviate from your plan To.....
- x. When you want to finish your talk To.....

More Signposting

Here are some more helpful signposts which you could use in the middle stage of your presentations.

Showing steps First of all let's look at.....

Then.....

Next.....

Lastly.....

Visuals too are included in the middle of a presentation. In the next section we discuss ways to present them:

Using Visuals

Visuals like bar graphs, line graphs, pie charts, pictograms, maps, photographs, charts,

PowerPoint slides are commonly used in presentations to present statistical information or to make comparisons. These will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter.

Introducing a visual

I'd like to show you.....

Have a look at this.....

This graph shows / represents.....

Here we can see.....

Let's look at this.....

As you can see in this graph / table.....

Comparisons This compares x with y

Let's compare the.....

Here you see a comparison between.....

Conclusion

And here is some language input for the end of your presentation.

Closing Finally, to sum up.....

I'd like to sum up now.....

That concludes my presentation.

To conclude.....

Questions / Discussion

At the end of a presentation you are required to invite the audience to ask any questions that they may like to ask. Alternatively you could also permit them to ask questions whenever they want in the course of your presentation. This has to be told to them in the very beginning.

Inviting questions Are there any questions?

If there are any questions I'll be glad to try to answer them.

I'll be glad to answer any questions you may have.

Now we could have a discussion on.....

Presentation Skills-I

Notes

Check Your Progress 5

Cross out the words in italics which are not suitable in these extracts from presentations:

- i) I would like to begin with a preview / an introduction / an outline of the main points of my talk.
- ii) The first thing I'll be saying / telling / talking about is why we need to change our pay policy.
- iii) I will then go on to inform / share / confide with you some of the viewpoints of our senior executives.
- iv) If we could just draw / focus / attract our attention on the major benefits of the scheme.
- v) I would like to inform / state / assure at the very beginning that this is just a proposal and not a decision.
- vi) But we do need to seriously ask / address / answer the question of how we are going to deal with the problem.
- vii) I will be glad to call / answer / invite any questions that you may have at the end of the presentation.
- viii) Please feel free to interrupt / ask / enquire me with any questions you may have in the course of the presentation.

LISTENING: IMPORTANCE OF BODY LANGUAGE IN PRESENTATIONS

You will now hear some tips on the importance of Body Language in Presentations. Listen to the audio and match the two columns:

Slouching	shows that you are friendly & approachable
eye contact	helps you to be more clear and effective
Smile	make for better understanding
Gestures	shows disinterest
Posture	enhances the comfort level of the audience
Proximity	helps counter boredom
Variation in voice	signals interest in others

Can you explain what the speaker means by:

- i) Smiling is contagious
- ii) Invading other's space.

Consult the Answer Key and compare your answer.

A. Listen to the beginning of a presentation on the introduction of a new course in Cinematics.

Do you think it is a good introduction?

B. Now listen to the beginning of another presentation on the same topic. Which one is better and why?

Compare your analysis with the one given in the Answer key.

SPEAKING: PREPARING AN OUTLINE OF A PRESENTATION

Now prepare an outline of a presentation on any one of these topics and present it before the mirror or before your friends. If possible you can record

Communication skills the presentation and then listen to it. You can now listen to the tape script and compare your outline with the sample tape script.

Notes 1. Your town / city
2. Television as a source of information and entertainment
3. Your favourite book / magazine
Now have a look at two sample outlines given in the Answer key.

PRONUNCIATION

Here are some words that are commonly used for presentations. Mark the stressed syllable in these words and speak them out aloud. The first is done for you as example. Now listen to the tape and check your pronunciation. You may also refer to a good dictionary for the correct stressed syllable.

1. Presentation
2. Recommendation
3. Expansion
4. Supervision
5. Efficient
6. Sufficient
7. Strategic
8. Systematic
9. Analytical
10. Economical
11. Typical
12. Experience
13. Inconvenience
14. Potential
15. Commercial
16. Individual
17. Essential
18. Gradual

Review Question

Q1- What do you mean by Presentation Skills?

Q2-What are the importances of body language in presentations?

Q3-Whay verbs often required in presentations?

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Hodgson, P. & Hodgson, J. (1993) Effective Meetings, London: Century Business.
2. Mack, A. (1970/1989) The Language of Business, London: BBC.
3. Rai, U. & Rai, S.M. (1989/1992) Business Communication, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing House

UNIT 9 PRESENTATION SKILLS-II

Presentation Skills-II

Notes

CONTENTS

- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Reading: Structure of Presentation
- ❖ Study Skills: Visual Aids
- ❖ Ending the Presentation
- ❖ Language Focus: Talking about Increase and Decrease
- ❖ Grammar: Prepositions
- ❖ Listening: Podium Panic
- ❖ Speaking
- ❖ Pronunciation: Emphasizing the Important Words in Context
- ❖ Summary
- ❖ Suggested Readings

OBJECTIVES

In the previous Unit the focus was on introductions and outlines. This unit takes you forward and introduces you to

- commonly used structures of presentations
- using visual aids
- language associated with visual aids
- summaries and conclusions
- question/answer sessions at the end of the presentations
- practicing presentations

Engaging the interest of the audience is central to the success of a presentation. Read these statements about the audience. To what extent do you agree with them? Discuss with a friend or a colleague at the Study Centre.

- Effective presenters recognize that communication is both intellectual and emotional. Organizing your ideas is part of the task. The other is to gain and maintain attention.
- Listeners listen only 25 to 50% of the time.
- The audience will forgive a lot if the speaker is enthusiastic. But don't confuse enthusiasm with loudness.
- Compose for the Ear, not for the Eye.

Structure of Presentation

Once you know what you want to say, you need to consolidate the materials into a meaningful message. When organizing your ideas begin by placing your topic in context.

The commonly used structures in presentations are:

1. Topical: This is when you have several ideas to present and one idea seems naturally to precede the other. This is one of the most common types of patterns, and it is especially useful for informative presentations.
2. Chronological: This uses time sequence for a framework. This structure is useful in informative and persuasive presentations, both of which require background information.

Communication skills	3. Classification: Puts things into categories. For example you might want to talk about three aspects of a product- finance, marketing and production.
Notes	<p>4. Problem/Solution: This is used mostly for persuasive presentations. The first part of the speech outlines a problem and the second part presents a solution.</p> <p>5. Cause/Effect can be used for persuasive speeches. The first part describes the cause of a problem and the second describes its effect.</p> <p>The structure of a presentation is outlined at the outset. Here are three such outlines. Match them with the appropriate structures listed above. Check your answers with the Answer key.</p> <p>A. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I'm here to talk to you about lack of efficiency in the Marketing division. Firstly, I will spell out specific areas where there has been laxity.</p> <p>Secondly, I will share with you what I believe to be the reasons for low performance in this division. Thirdly, I will suggest solutions for tackling this problem. At the end of my presentation we will have a discussion where you can express your views about the problem.</p> <p>B. This morning I am going to talk to you about our new policy on personal loans. I will begin my presentation by outlining the main features of this policy. I will then go on to highlight the major employee benefits of this new policy. Next I will talk you through the new procedure for availing these loans. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have in the course of the presentation.</p> <p>C. I'm here to make a presentation on Netlinks Worldwide. I shall begin with a brief history of the company, after which I will present a brief profile of its present status. Next I'll go on to talk to you about our major products and services. I will then focus on specific products and services which could meet your needs and enhance your output. I will conclude my presentation with a 10 minute film on useful packages for your company. In all, my presentation will take 30 minutes.</p>

STUDY SKILLS: VISUAL AIDS

Using Visual Aids

A variety of visual aids like flip charts, line graphs, bar graphs, pie charts, pictograms, maps, tables, diagrams, photographs, etc. can be used for presentations. Visual aids are commonly used in presentations to present information which is complex or statistical in nature.

Visual aids can make a presentation more interesting and easier to understand. They also help you to cut down on the amount of talking you have to do. However, you must ensure that your visuals are relevant, appropriate and clear. You must never overload them with information. Effective presenters introduce and highlight visual information briefly and clearly, making sure they allow their audience time to absorb the information. Use visuals to reinforce and clarify, and not to overwhelm the audience. Here are three samples of visuals commonly used for presentations – a pie chart, a table and a bar graph. In order to be able to talk about them you need language which is specifically used to describe visuals. Let us recap the useful expressions for introducing visuals which you learnt in the last unit and apply them to the given visuals. The expressions are highlighted in bold. In addition, you will also be introduced to some more formulaic language useful for describing visuals.

I. I'd like to show you a pie chart that will give you a clear picture of our sales in the four sectors in the last quarter. **As you can see**.....

II. Have a look at this table. It shows the number of students enrolled for our different courses in the last five years. **As you will notice** the demand for our.....

III. This bar graph shows / represents our exports in the last six years.

Exports in Rupees

1. **Here we can see**.....

2. **Let's look at this**.....

3. **As you can see in this bar graph**

How would you talk about the visuals given in exercises I, II and III? Practice and record your presentation. Now listen to the three sample tape scripts.

Listen to the tape scripts again and write down the terms used to describe trends in the graph.

Check these with the tape script given in the key where these have been underlined for you.

ENDING THE PRESENTATION

Summaries and Conclusions

- Make sure you summarize.
- A summary restates the main points and emphasizes what the audience must remember. It should be brief and must not contain any new information.
- Create an Effective Conclusion.
- Don't just present data or summarized results and leave the audience to draw its own conclusions.
- You need to state the logical consequences of what you have said. The conclusion may often contain recommendations. However, the conclusion must also be brief.
- Read the two texts that follow: 1 is the summary, and 2 is the conclusion. In the summary we highlight the salient points, while in the conclusions we give recommendations.

1. I'd like to end by emphasizing the main points

- Contrary to our expectations our exports have not risen
- This is mainly due to our inability to handle foreign buyers
- Our Marketing and Sales division has faced various difficulties in overcoming cultural and communication barriers

2. So what do we conclude from this?

- We must have specific training in communication skills for those who are dealing with our foreign customers
- We must also give them exposure to the culture of our foreign buyers by sending them to International Trade Fairs
- Encourage overseas visits for those who deal directly with the foreigners

Questions? Discussion

During a presentation you are required to give the audience a chance to ask questions. Your policy on questions must be stated right at the outset. While presenting the outline you should let the audience know whether they can interrupt you with questions in the course of the presentations or you would

Communication skills like them to ask questions at the end of your presentation. Alternatively you can invite the audience to a discussion.

Notes Remember that when members of the audience ask you questions, it means that they have a genuine interest in what you are saying and want to know more. Treat this as an opportunity to get your message across better. Here are some helpful clues for handling questions:

- try to anticipate questions and prepare responses in advance
- rehearse answers to difficult questions
- listen very carefully – avoid the temptation to interrupt
- make sure you understand the question - paraphrase it if necessary; repeat it if needed
- give yourself time to think
- **be Honest:** if you can't answer the question, say so
- keep control over the audience and don't allow any chaos
- ensure that you entertain only relevant questions
- keep a lookout for time – don't allow the question /discussion session to linger interminably
- **be polite**
- don't forget to thank the audience at the end

LANGUAGE FOCUS: TALKING ABOUT INCREASE AND DECREASE

Most visuals used for presentations represent some kind of change or trend – an increase or a decrease. Some of them make comparisons. Be clear about whether you need to talk about the quantum of increase / decrease or the speed at which the increase / decrease has taken place. This will help you to choose the right language.

Here is language that can help you to describe these accurately and appropriately. When you wish to describe the quantum of increase or decrease you could use the following expressions:

1. There was a **marginal fall / rise** in sales or Sales **rose / fell marginally**.
2. There was a **nominal increase / decrease** in expenditure on overheads or Expenditure on overheads **increased / decreased nominally**
3. There was a **considerable improvement** in savings or Savings **improved considerably**.
4. There was a **significant rise** in production or Production **rose / went up significantly**.

Words like **slight, marked, dramatic** are also used to describe changes or differences.

The speed of increase / decrease can be talked about with the help of these expressions:

1. There was a **slow increase** in the sale of televisions or The sale of televisions **increased slowly**.
2. There was a **gradual improvement** in the interest rates or The interest rates **improved gradually**.
3. There has been a **steady improvement** in the skilled labour situation over the last five years or the labour situation has **improved steadily** over the last five years.
4. There has been a **rapid rise** in the cell phone market **or** the cell phone market has **risen rapidly**.
5. There was a **quick decline** in the share market.

The share market **declined / deteriorated / went down quickly**.

Here is a visual on sales figures of sportswear and sports equipment in the last two years. Complete this write up on the visual making use of suitable words from above:

Sportswear

Sports Equipment

The bar graph shows the comparative sales figures of Sportswear and sports equipment in the years 2001 and 2002. In the year 2001 our income from sale of sportswear was _____ of the income from sale of sports equipment. However, there was a _____ of more than 40000000 in the sale of sportswear in the year 2002. On the other hand, the sale of sports equipment _____ in 2002.

Check your answers with the key. Remember that a variety of expressions can be used to describe this graph. What is given in the key is one possible way of doing this.

GRAMMAR: PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions play an extremely important role in talking about visuals. If you say 'The sales rose **to** Rs. 300000' instead of saying 'The sales rose **by** Rs 300000', the entire meaning of your text will be changed. So it is very important to use the right prepositions.

Complete this text by inserting the appropriate prepositions from the box. You may use some of the prepositions more than once:

to on from at by of I'd like us to look _____ this part of the graph in more detail. As you will notice, we started this year _____ a weak note with sales at the Rs. 51000 mark. However, as you can see, sales rose dramatically by the end of the first quarter _____ Rs. 51000 _____ Rs. 100000, which means they rose _____ Rs. 490000 – an increase _____ almost 100%. I would also like to draw your attention _____ our performance in the second quarter where the sales have dropped marginally _____ Rs. 700000. If we don't focus our attention _____ the northern sector, chances are that we may have a further decline in our sales.

LISTENING: PODIUM PANIC

Before doing a listening task, you must take care of the following:

- See that your equipment is in order
- Read through the questions quickly
- Listen to the tape and answer the questions-as much as you can.
- Listen again, to complete answering as well as to check any mistakes.

Listen to this audio on podium panic and answer the questions that follow. Remember to choose your answers on the basis of the logic used by the speaker.

i. The speaker suggests that

- a. almost all speakers suffer from fright
- b. few speakers suffer from fright
- c. fright can be totally overcome

ii. The audience is forgiving when your mistakes are

- a. because of inadequate preparation
- b. out of nervousness
- c. few

iii. Sharing your fears with friends helps you to

- a. speak better
- b. relax and overcome your anxiety
- c. find solutions to your problems

iv. Learning your introduction helps you to

- a. make a good first impression
- b. to control the audience better
- c. to feel more confident

SPEAKING

Plan a complete presentation with outline, introduction, the body - which must include at least one visual, and the conclusion. Also don't forget the question /answer session. The topic could be one that is relevant to your company or interests. In case you can't decide about a topic on your own you may choose one of these:

1. Your Favourite sport
2. Holidays
3. Tourism
4. The Structure of your Company / Department
5. Training facilities in your company
6. Customer service
7. Overcoming job stress

Make the presentation before your friends / study partners and ask them to give you a feedback in the following areas:

1. Content
2. Structure
3. Rapport with audience
4. Body language
5. The quality and use of visual aids
6. Language – grammar & vocabulary

Alternatively, record your presentation. Listen to it and assess yourself on the basis of the above mentioned criteria. Take it to the Study Centre, play it to your colleagues for their comments.

PRONUNCIATION: EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANT WORDS IN CONTEXT

Stressing the right words is an important aspect of Presentation Skills.

Can you underline the words that you think should be stressed more in the given sentences?

1. Sales have increased from last year. But the profits have hardly moved at all.
2. It's hard to enter the Middle East market. But its harder still to break into the European market.
3. There are three points I'd like to make. And all three are about our recent advertising campaign.
4. We haven't made big gains yet. But what we've achieved is quite significant.
5. We've made inroads into the East zone. But the North zone is still lagging behind.
6. Tourist facilities in the region have improved considerably. But we still have a long way to go.

7. Better training facilities are not just important. They are an absolute must.
8. Customers have a right to expect follow up. We are the ones who have failed them
9. The market may be growing. But our market share certainly isn't.
10. We need to give more paid leave to our employees. That's the only way to ensure they have adequate time to distress.

Presentation Skills-II

Notes

SUMMARY

In this unit, we further developed the ideas we had introduced in the previous unit on Presentations. In the Reading Section we introduced you to the most commonly used structure of Presentations.

In the middle of a Presentation, we often need to use visual aids, especially when the information is complex or statistical in nature. In the section on Study Skills, we give you language which helps you in introducing and talking through pie charts, tables and bar graphs. We also show you ways of ending a Presentation. This would include a recap of the salient points, some recommendations on given situations and the fielding of questions with politeness and honesty.

In the section: Language Focus and Grammar, we have again emphasized on language used in visual aids.

In the Listening section, we have turned to the psychological frame of mind of the Presenter. In the Speaking section, we encourage you to write and practice your own Presentation.

Review Question

- Q1- What are the Structure of Presentation?
- Q2- What do you mean by Visual Aids?
- Q3- What is prepositions?
- Q4- What do mean by Speaking?

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Goodale, M. Professional Presentations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Hollett, V. Business Opportunities. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

UNIT 10 NEGOTIATION SKILLS

CONTENTS

- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Reading
- ❖ Language Focus: Idiomatic Expressions
- ❖ Study Skills: Process of Negotiations
- ❖ Grammar: Phrasal Verbs
- ❖ Listening: Effective Negotiations
- ❖ Speaking
- ❖ Writing
- ❖ Summary
- ❖ Suggested Readings

OBJECTIVES

In this Unit you will learn -

- the essentials of successful negotiations
- the stages of negotiation
- how to negotiate successfully
- the language of negotiations
- how to follow up an oral negotiation with a letter

Negotiations can be a nightmare if they are not handled properly. What do you think makes a good negotiator?

Discuss with a friend or a fellow student at the Study Centre.

READING

Although 'negotiation' may sound rather intimidating, this is a skill which most of us have already used to some degree albeit unconsciously, and probably many more times than we realize. How many times have you been in one or more of the following situations? You need to ask your boss for a salary increase; you want to convince a son or daughter to do something they may not wish to do. The stakes may be different in each case, but the common thread running through them is the need for negotiation skills. Negotiating is an activity that all managers engage in to some degree, perhaps dozens of times every day.

Typically, negotiation takes place informally: on the telephone, at a quickly called meeting, or during an impromptu conversation with someone in the lobby. Sometimes negotiation can take place abruptly, when you are least prepared, and be concluded in a matter of seconds.

Regardless of the form negotiation takes, it is very important to have a well-developed set of negotiation skills in order to run your business successfully. Even if you feel you already have a talent for negotiating, there are always ways to develop and continuously improve your negotiation skills. To develop these skills and use them effectively, you must know:

- what negotiation means and the various forms it can take
- that negotiating, in the fullest sense, means forging long-term relationships
- the role that the individual personalities play in negotiating

Here is a list of qualities that a negotiator must have.

Good negotiators:

- i. Create a friendly atmosphere

- ii. Build up good rapport with the individual / party that they are negotiating with
- iii. Are firm about their stand
- iv. Keep the interest of both sides in mind
- v. Look for immediate gains
- vi. Are willing to make concessions
- vii. Are persuasive
- viii. Are articulate
- ix. Are good listeners
- x. Frequently check to confirm that everything has been correctly understood by both parties

Negotiation Skills

Notes

LANGUAGE FOCUS: IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Study the idiomatic expressions in the speech balloons and see if you can relate them to Negotiating situations.

- I'm sorry but I don't see eye to eye with you!
- I'm willing to come half way!
- You are our most valued customer!
- Have it your way!
- I'm afraid that's as far as we can go!
- We'd be happy to accommodate you!
- Aren't we splitting hair here?

STUDY SKILLS: PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS

There are four main phases in a negotiation:

1. **The preparation phase:** this is where you identify your purpose and set your priorities. You must also decide in advance what is the lowest deal or offer that you will be willing to accept. Have all information that you are likely to need available with you.
2. **The debating phase:** negotiation is a process of give and take where you give a little and get a little at the same time. Here you try to find out what the person or party you are negotiating with wants. During this phase you must state what you want but do not spell out all the conditions yet. Use open questions and be willing to listen to the other person too. Try to find out how much the other person is willing to move from his/her stand.
3. **The proposal stage:** This is where you suggest the concessions you are willing to make. Formulate your proposals with if....., then..... Listen to the other side's proposals too. Build on common ground.
4. **The bargaining phase:** This is the part where you spell out what it is that you will actually trade. Accept and confirm details agreed upon by repeating them. Summarize the proposal in a few words. End positively by looking ahead.

Here are some more expressions that could be extremely helpful during negotiations:

Welcoming: Good to see you.

I'm sure our meeting will be useful

Stating your aim: We'd like to let you know that..... *Negotiation Skills*

We want to clarify our position on.....

Making concessions: If you are willing to.....we could.....

We could offer you.....

Accepting: That seems alright

We agree.

Rejecting: I'm afraid we can't.....

Unfortunately this won't be possible.

Confirming: Let me just repeat what we've agreed upon.

Can we just run through that again?

Summarizing: Just to recap the main points.....

Let just summarize what we've agreed upon.

Looking ahead: So the next step will be.....

So when do we meet next?

GRAMMAR: PHRASAL VERBS

Phrasal Verbs

There are some verbs and prepositions which have a special meaning when they are used together. In this way they function like idioms. These combinations have to be memorized like irregular verbs. When the phrases are spoken the stress falls on the preposition. These are called phrasal verbs.

LISTENING: EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS

Listen to a talk on Effective Negotiations and complete the given text by inserting the missing words. Listen to it again in case you have missed out some words. Check your answers with the Key.

Now read the completed text for some more information on effective negotiations.

Effective negotiation skills are an important 1_____ in today's business environment. Therefore it is necessary to make proper 2_____ to ensure that negotiations run 3_____. First of all one must 4_____ out the negotiation in detail. This can be done well only if you find out as much as possible about the 5_____ and the 6_____ with which the negotiation is to take place. Sometimes it's hard to create a 7_____ situation in negotiations, in spite of good preparation.

The 8_____ of the negotiation must be clearly defined at the outset. Also identify the 9_____ that you can offer in the course of the negotiation. You must also keep in mind that you cannot hope to push your 10_____ at the cost of the other party. Therefore decide in advance what you should state and to what extent you can 11_____ your demands to accommodate the other party's interests.

Both parties must strive to create a 12_____ atmosphere at the very start.

Establishing a good rapport at the outset creates a 13_____ environment of 14_____ respect and trust for the negotiation. Clear communication, mutual respect, and trust can get things going in the right direction.

SPEAKING

Practice one or both of these negotiations with one or more partners at your study centre. Refer to the Answer Key and tape script for a suggested version. i. Imagine a situation where you are a seller who is negotiating with a buyer. The buyer is asking you for a 10% discount whereas you have already agreed to give him a 5% discount.

Try to negotiate and settle for 7%. In return for this concession ask for the credit limit that you have given to your buyer to be reduced from 40% to 35%.

ii. You are making arrangements for a wedding to be held in your family. Negotiate with the caterers to reduce the cost of food per plate from Rs. 350 to Rs 300.

Negotiation Skills

Notes

SUMMARY

In this unit, we have briefly touched upon the skill of Negotiation which we not only require in our business transactions but in our day to day life as well. While you may be an excellent negotiator in real life, we have given you some steps so that you are systematically aware of what you are doing. We have also provided you with tape scripts of actual negotiations. This will help you become even better at negotiations. Phrasal Verbs are often used in negotiations, especially in 'spoken' English; we have therefore given you some practice in their use. Finally, after a negotiated settlement, there is often a letter written to confirm the negotiation. We have given you practice in writing such a letter.

Review Question

Q2- What do you mean by Idiomatic Expressions?

Q1- What are the Process of Negotiations?

Q3-What are Phrasal Verbs?

SUGGESTED READINGS

Rodgers, D. English for International Negotiations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sinha, K.K. Business Communication. Delhi: Galgotia Publishing Company.

Tull, G and Lannon, M. Insights into Business. London: Longman.

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