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Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University

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Communication Skills

Bachelor of Science (Hons.)
Information Technology

BSCIT - 101

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Communication Skills

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University

Communication Skills

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BSCIT-101

Communication Skills

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Aspects of Communication

Unit 1: COMMUNICATION: AN INTRODUCTION

1

Unit Structure

1.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to understand:

- Recognize the importance of communication.
- Define communication the communication process.
- Identify and describe the eight essential components of communication.
- Explore the different contexts affecting communication.

1.2. INTRODUCTION

Communication is the process of understanding and sharing meaning[1]. It's an activity, skill, and art that incorporates lessons learned across a wide spectrum of human knowledge. You communicate every day without thinking about that process: from the conversation with your family in the morning, reading a news article on your phone, ordering coffee, participating in class, texting your friends — communication is a primary skill you've been practising since birth!

The material in this book will help give you the skills, confidence, and preparation to use communication in furthering your career.

1.3. Meaning of Communication

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[1] Pearson, J., & Nelson, P. (2000). *An introduction to human communication: Understanding and sharing*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

All communication is composed of three parts that make a whole: sharing, understanding, and meaning.

Sharing means doing something together with one or more person(s). In communication, sharing occurs when you convey thoughts, feelings, ideas, or insights to others. You also share with yourself (a process called intrapersonal communication) when you bring ideas to consciousness, ponder how you feel about something, figure out the solution to a problem, or have a classic "Aha!" moment when something becomes clear.

The second key word is **understanding.** "To understand is to perceive, to interpret, and to relate our perception and interpretation to what we already know." (McLean, 2003) Understanding the words and the concepts or objects they refer to is an important part of the communication process.

Finally, **meaning** is what you share through communication. For example, by looking at the context of a word, and by asking questions, you can discover the shared meaning of the word and better understand the message.

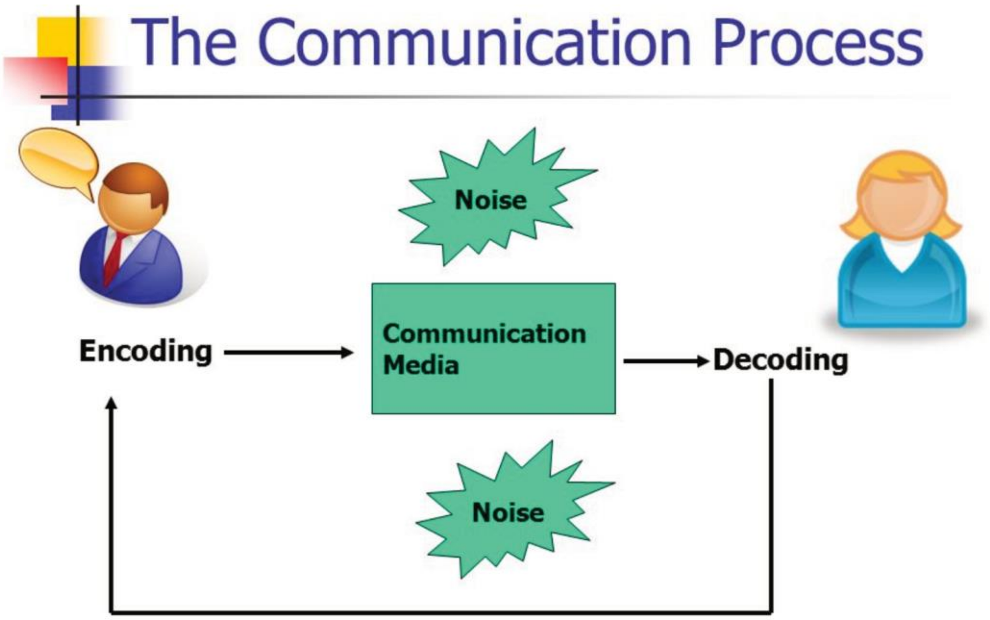
- Interpersonal communication is any message exchanged between two or more people.
- Written communication is any message using the written word.
- Verbal, or oral, communication is any message conveyed through speech.
- Non-Verbal communication is any message inferred through observation of another person.

1.4. COMMUNICATION PROCESS : ENCODING AND DECODING

In basic terms, humans communicate through a process of **encoding** and **decoding.** The encoder is the person who develops and sends the message. As represented in Figure 1.1 below, the encoder must determine how the message will be received by the audience, and make adjustments so the message is received the way they want it to be received.

Encoding is the process of turning thoughts into communication. The encoder uses a 'medium' to send the message — a phone call, email, text message, face-to-face meeting, or other communication tool. The level of conscious thought that goes into encoding messages may vary. The encoder should also take into account any ‘noise’ that might interfere with their message, such as other messages, distractions, or influences.

The audience then ‘decodes’, or interprets, the message for themselves. **Decoding** is the process of turning communication into thoughts. For example, you may realize you’re hungry and encode the following message to send to your roommate: “I’m hungry. Do you want to get pizza tonight?” As your roommate receives the message, they decode your communication and turn it back into thoughts to make meaning.



1.5. EIGHT ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF COMMUNICATION

The communication process can be broken down into a series of eight essential components, each of which serves an integral function in the overall process:

- Source
- Message
- Channel
- Receiver
- Feedback

- Environment
- Context
- Interference

1.5.1 Source

The source imagines, creates, and sends the message. The source encodes the message by choosing just the right order or the best words to convey the intended meaning, and presents or sends the information to the audience (receiver). By watching for the audience's reaction, the source perceives how well they received the message and responds with clarification or supporting information.

1.5.2 Message

"The message is the stimulus or meaning produced by the source for the receiver or audience"[2]. The message brings together words to convey meaning, but is also about how it's conveyed — through non-verbal cues, organization, grammar, style, and other elements.

1.5.3 Channel

"The channel is the way in which a message or messages travel between source and receiver." (McLean, 2005). Spoken channels include face-to-face conversations, speeches, phone conversations and voicemail messages, radio, public address systems, and Skype. Written channels include letters, memorandums, pur- chase orders, invoices, newspaper and magazine articles, blogs, e-mail, text messages, tweets, and so forth.

1.5.4 Receiver

"The receiver receives the message from the source, analysing and interpreting the message in ways both intended and unintended by the source" (McLean, 2005).

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[2] McLean, S. (2005). *The basics of interpersonal communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn Bacon.

1.5.5 Feedback

When you respond to the source, intentionally or unintentionally, you are giving feedback. Feedback is com- posed of messages the receiver sends back to the source. Verbal or nonverbal, all these feedback signals allow the source to see how well, how accurately (or how poorly and inaccurately) the message was received[3] .

1.5.6 Environment

“The environment is the atmosphere, physical and psychological, where you send and receive messages” (McLean, 2005). Surroundings, people, animals, technology, can all influence your communication.

1.5.7 Context

“The context of the communication interaction involves the setting, scene, and expectations of the individuals involved” (McLean, 2005). A professional communication context may involve business suits (environ- mental cues) that directly or indirectly influence expectations of language and behaviour among the participants.

1.5.8 Interference

Interference, also called noise, can come from any source. “Interference is anything that blocks or changes the source’s intended meaning of the message” (McLean, 2005). This can be external or internal/psychological. Noise interferes with normal encoding and decoding of the message carried by the channel between source and receiver.

1.6. IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

People share a fundamental drive to communicate. You share meaning in what you say and how you say it, both in oral and written forms. Your communication skills help you to understand others—not just their words, but also their tone of voice, and their nonverbal gestures. The format of their written documents provides you with

[3] Leavitt, H. J., & Mueller, R. A. (1951). *Some effects of feedback on communication*. Retrieved from http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/001872675100400406

clues about who they are and what their values and priorities may be. Active listening and reading are also part of being a successful communicator.

Your speaking and writing are reflections of your thoughts, experience, and education. Part of that combination is your level of experience listening to other speakers, reading documents and styles of writing, and studying formats similar to what you aim to produce.

As you study professional business communication, you may receive suggestions for improvement and clarification from speakers and writers more experienced than yourself. Your success in communicating is a skill that applies to every field of work, and it makes a difference in your relationships with others.

You want to be prepared to communicate well when given the opportunity. Each time you do a good job, your success will bring more success.

An individual with excellent communication skills is an asset to every organization. No matter what career you plan to pursue, learning to express yourself professionally in your communications will help you get there.

1.7. COMMUNICATION IN CONTEXT

Context is made up of the parts of communication that influence the meaning of a message. Context has an influence on the communication process. Contexts can overlap, creating an even more dynamic process.

You have been communicating in many contexts across your lifetime, and you'll be able to apply what you've learned from experiences in multiple contexts to business communication.

1.7.1. Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal communication involves one person; it is often called "self-talk"[4]. The book[5] on this topic explains how, as you use language to reflect on your own

[4] Wood, J. (1997). *Communication in our lives*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth.

experiences, you talk yourself through situations. Your intrapersonal communication can be positive or negative, and directly influences how you perceive and react to situations and communication with others. For example, before a big presentation, you may give yourself a pep talk to calm feelings of anxiety and give yourself a boost of confidence.

What you perceive in communication with others is also influenced by your culture, native language, and your world view. As the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas said, “Every process of reaching understanding takes place against the background of a culturally ingrained pre-understanding”[6].

1.7.2. Interpersonal Communication

The second major context within the field of communication is interpersonal communication which normally involves two people, and can range from intimate and very personal to formal and impersonal. A conversation over coffee with a colleague about a project you’re working on would be a form of interpersonal communication.

1.7.3. Group Communication

“Group communication is a dynamic process where a small number of people engage in a conversation” (McLean, 2005). Group communication is generally defined as involving three to eight people. The larger the group, the more likely it is to break down into smaller groups.

When engaging with groups, you can observe factors like age, education, sex, and location to learn more about general preferences as well as dislikes. You may find several groups within the larger audience, such as specific areas of education, and use this knowledge to increase your effectiveness as a business communicator.

1.7.4. Public Communication

In public communication, one person speaks to a group of people; the same is true of public written communication, where one person writes a message to be read by a small or large group. The speaker or writer may ask questions, and engage the

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[5] Vocate, D. (Ed.). (1994). *Intrapersonal communication: Different voices, different minds*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

[6] Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

audience in a discussion (in writing, examples are an e-mail discussion or a point-counter-point series of letters to the editor), but the dynamics of the conversation are distinct from group communication, where different rules apply.

1.7.5. Mass Communication

Through mass communication, you send a message to as many people as possible. Mass communication involves sending a single message to a group. It allows you to communicate your message to a large number of people. Something to consider, however, is that you may be limited in your ability to tailor your message to specific audiences, groups, or individuals when using mass communication. As a business communicator, you can use multimedia as a visual aid or reference common programs, films, or other images that your audience finds familiar yet engaging. By choosing messages or references that many audience members will recognize or can identify with, you can develop common ground and increase the appeal of your message.

1.8. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A COMMUNICATOR

Four Tips for Communication

Whenever you speak or write in a business environment, you have certain responsibilities to your audience, your employer, and your profession. Your audience comes to you with an inherent set of expectations that is your responsibility to fulfil. The specific expectations may change given the context or environment, but two central ideas will remain: be prepared, and be ethical.

1.8.1. Preparation

Being prepared means that you have selected a topic appropriate to your audience, gathered enough information to cover the topic well, put your information into a logical sequence, and considered how best to present it.

1.8.2. Organization

Being organized involves the steps or points that lead your communication to a conclusion. Once you've invested time in researching your topic, you will want to narrow your focus to a few key points and consider how you'll present them. You also need to consider how to link your main points together for your audience so they can follow your message from point to point.

1.8.3. Clarity

You need to have a clear idea in your mind of what you want to say before you can say it clearly to someone else. It involves considering your audience, as you will want to choose words and phrases they understand and avoid jargon or slang that may be unfamiliar to them. Clarity also involves presentation and appropriate use of technology.

1.8.4. Punctuality

Concise means to be brief and to the point. In most business communications you are expected to 'get down to business' right away. Being prepared includes being able to state your points clearly and support them with trustworthy evidence in a relatively straightforward, linear way.

Be concise in your choice of words, organization, and even visual aids. Being concise also involves being sensitive to time constraints. Be prepared to be punctual and adhere to deadlines or time limits.

Some cultures also have a less strict interpretation of time schedules and punctuality. While it is important to recognize that different cultures have different expectations, the general rule holds true that good business communication does not waste words or time.

1.9. ETHICS IN COMMUNICATION

Communicating ethically involves being egalitarian, respectful, and trustworthy—overall, practising the 'golden rule' of treating your audience the way you would want to be treated.

Communication can move communities, influence cultures, and change history. It can motivate people to take stand, consider an argument, or purchase a product. The degree to which you consider both the common good and fundamental principles you hold to be true when crafting your message directly relates to how your message will affect others.

1.9.1. The Ethical Communicator Is Egalitarian

The word “egalitarian” comes from the root “equal.” To be egalitarian is to believe in basic equality: that all people should share equally in the benefits and burdens of a society. It means that everyone is entitled to the same respect, expectations, access to information, and rewards of participation in a group.

To communicate in an egalitarian manner, speak and write in a way that is comprehensible and relevant to all your listeners or readers, not just those who are ‘like you’ in terms of age, gender, race or ethnicity, or other characteristics. In business, an effective communicator seeks to unify the audience by using ideas and language that are appropriate for all the message’s readers or listeners.

1.9.2. The Ethical Communicator Is Respectful

People are influenced by emotions as well as logic. The ethical communicator will be passionate and enthusiastic without being disrespectful. Losing one’s temper and being abusive are generally regarded as show- ing a lack of professionalism (and could even involve legal consequences for you or your employer). When you disagree strongly with a co-worker, feel deeply annoyed with a difficult customer, or find serious fault with a competitor’s product, it is important to express such sentiments respectfully.

1.9.3. The Ethical Communicator Is Trustworthy

Trust is a key component in communication, and this is especially true in business. Your goal as a communicator is to build a healthy relationship with your audience, and to do that you must show them how they can trust you and why the information you are about to share with them is believable.

Your audience will expect that what you say is the truth as you understand it. This means that you have not intentionally omitted, deleted, or taken information out of context simply to prove your points. They will lis- ten to what you say and how you say it, but also to what you don’t say or do. Being worthy of trust is some- thing you earn with an audience. Many wise people have observed that trust is hard to build but easy to lose.

1.9.4. The “Golden Rule”

When in doubt, remember the "golden rule," which is to treat others the way you would like to be treated. In all its many forms, the golden rule incorporates human kindness, cooperation, and reciprocity across cultures, languages, backgrounds, and interests. Regardless of where you travel, with whom you communicate or what your audience is like, remember how you would feel if you were on the receiving end of your communication and act accordingly.

1.10.LET US SUM UP

Communication is an essential component of business. While communication is a natural part of the human experience, it's important to consider how you will communicate in a positive and effective manner that aligns with your responsibilities and reputation as a business professional.

1.11. FURTHER READING

- The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) is a global network of communication professionals committed to improving organizational effectiveness through strategic communication. http://www.iabc.com
- Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) provides a wealth of resources for writing projects. http://owl.english.purdue.edu

1.12. ASSIGNMENTS

1. Recognize the importance of communication.
2. Define communication the communication process.
3. Identify and describe the eight essential components of communication.
4. Explore the different contexts affecting communication.
5. Discuss the responsibilities of a business communicator.

Unit 2: DELIVERING YOUR MESSAGE

2

Unit Structure

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to understand:

- The importance of delivering message in words.
- Explore how the characteristics of language interact in ways that can both improve and diminish effective business communication.
- Examine how language plays a significant role in how you perceive and interact with the world, and how culture, language, education, gender, race, and ethnicity all influence this dynamic process.
- Ways to avoid miscommunication and focus on constructive ways to get your message delivered to your receiver with the meaning you intended.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

How do you communicate? How do you think? We use language as a system to create and exchange meaning with one another, and the types of words we use influence both our perceptions and others interpretations of our meanings. What kinds of words would you use to describe your thoughts and feelings, your preferences in music, cars, food, or other things that matter to you? In this chapter you will learn more about the importance of delivering your message in words. You will explore how the characteristics of language interact in ways that can both improve and diminish effective business communication. You will examine how language plays a significant role in how you perceive and interact with the world, and how culture, language, education, gender, race, and ethnicity all influence this dynamic process. You will look at ways to avoid miscommunication and focus on constructive ways to get your message delivered to your receiver with the meaning you intended.

2.3 WHAT IS LANGUAGE?

Language is a system of symbols, words, and/or gestures used to communicate meaning.

People are raised in different cultures, with different values, beliefs, customs, and different languages to express those cultural attributes. Even people who speak the same language, like speakers of English in London, New Delhi, or Calgary, speak and interact using their own words that are community-defined, self- defined, and have room for interpretation. This variation in our use of language is a creative way to form relationships and communities, but can also lead to miscommunication.

Words themselves, then, actually hold no meaning. It takes at least two people to use them, to give them life and purpose. Words change meaning over time. The dictionary entry for the meaning of a word changes because we change, and multiple meanings can lead to miscommunication.

Languages are living exchange systems of meaning and are bound by context. If you are assigned to a team that coordinates with suppliers from Shanghai, China and a sales staff in London, Ontario you may encounter terms from both groups that influence your team.

2.3.1 Triangle of Meaning

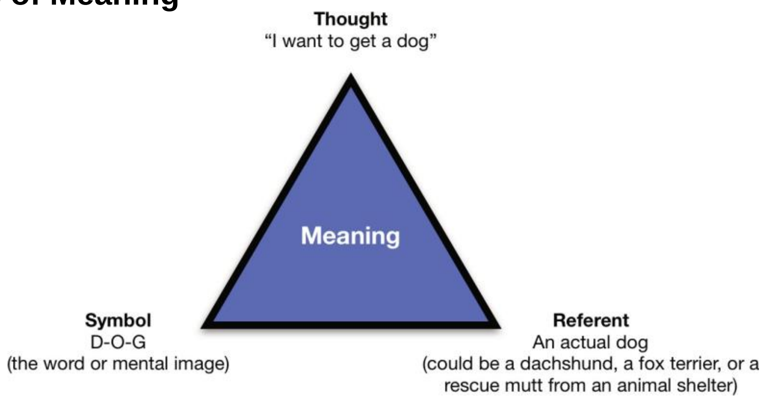


Figure 2.1. The triangle of meaning. This figure illustrates a symbol and referent in relation to a thought (Adapted from Ogden & Richards, 1932).

The triangle of meaning is a model of communication that indicates the relationship among a thought, symbol, and referent and highlights the indirect relationship between the symbol and referent[7] (Ogden & Richards, 1932). As represented in Figure 2.1 below, the thought is the concept or idea a person references. The symbol is the word that represents the thought, and the referent is the object or idea to which the symbol refers. This model is useful for you as a communicator because when you are aware of the indirect relationship between symbols and referents, you are aware of how common misunderstandings occur, as the following example illustrates:

[7] Odgen, C., & Richards, I. (1932). The meaning of meaning: A study of the influence of language upon thought and of the science of symbolism. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace World.

Example

Jasper and Abby have been thinking about getting a new dog. So each of them is having a similar thought. They are each using the same symbol, the word dog, to communicate about their thought. Their referents, however, are different. Jasper is thinking about a small dog like a dachshund, and Abby is thinking about an Australian shepherd. Since the word dog doesn't refer to one specific object in our reality, it is possible for them to have the same thought, and use the same symbol, but end up in an awkward moment when they get to the shelter and fall in love with their respective referents only to find out the other person didn't have the same thing in mind. Abby could ask questions for clarification, like "Sounds like you're saying that a smaller dog might be better. Is that right?" Getting to a place of shared understanding can be difficult, even when we define our symbols and describe our referents.

2.4 MESSAGES

It will be helpful to stop for a moment and examine some characteristics of the messages you send when you communicate. Messages carry far more than the literal meaning of each word and in this section you are invited to explore that complexity.

Primary Message Is Not the Whole Message

When considering how to effectively use verbal communication, keep in mind there are three distinct types of messages you will be communicating: primary, secondary, and auxiliary (Hasling, 1998).

Primary Message – refers to the intentional content, both verbal and nonverbal.

Secondary Message – refers to the unintentional content, both verbal and nonverbal.

Auxiliary Message – refers to the intentional and unintentional ways a primary message is communicated. It includes: vocal inflection, gestures and posture, or rate of speech that influence the interpretation or perception of your message.

For example, a coworker stops by your desk to ask a question and…

- You say, “Have a seat”. (Primary Message)
- A messy workspace makes an impression on your visitor that you are disorganized. (Secondary Message)
- You smile and wave your hand to indicate the empty chair on the other side of your desk to invite the person to sit. (Auxiliary Message)

2.4.1 Parts of a Message

When you create a message, it is often helpful to think of it as having five parts:

- Attention Statement – captures the attention of your audience.
- Introduction – a clear statement about your topic; this is also the time to establish a relationship with your audience.
- Body – present your message in detail, using any of a variety of organizational structures.
- Conclusion – provide the audience with a sense of closure by summarizing your main points and relating them to the overall topics.
- Residual Message – a message or thought that stays with your audience well after the communication is finished. This can be an important part of your message.

When planning communication, ask yourself of the following:

- What do I want my listeners or readers to remember?
- What information do I want to have the audience retain or act upon?
- What do I want the audience to do?

2.5 PRINCIPLES OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication is based on several basic principles. In this section, you’ll examine each principle and explore how it influences everyday communication. Whether it’s a simple conversation with a co-worker or a formal sales presentation to a board of directors, these principles apply to all contexts of communication.

2.5.1 Language Has Rules

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, language is a system of symbols, words, and/or gestures used to communicate meaning.

The words themselves have meaning within their specific context or language community. Words only carry meaning if you know the understood meaning and have a grasp of their context to interpret them correctly.

There are three types of rules that govern or control your use of words.

Syntactic Rules – govern the order of words in a sentence.

Semantic Rules – govern the meaning of words and how to interpret them (Martinich, 1996). Contextual Rules – govern meaning and word choice according to context and social custom.

Consider the example of a traffic light as follows:

Semantics – Green means Go, and Red means Stop

Syntax – Green is on the bottom, yellow in the middle, and red on top.

Even when you follow these linguistic rules, miscommunication is possible. Your cultural context or community may hold different meanings for the words used – different from meanings that the source communicator intended. Words attempt to represent the ideas you want to communicate, but they are sometimes limited by factors beyond your control. Words often require you to negotiate meaning, or to explain what you mean in more than one way, in order to create a common vocabulary. You may need to state a word, define it, and provide an example in order to come to an understanding with your audience about the meaning of your message.

As discussed previously, words, by themselves, do not have any inherent meaning. Humans give meaning to them, and their meanings change across time. The arbitrary symbols, including letters, numbers, and punctuation marks, stand for concepts in your experience. You have to negotiate the meaning of the word “home,” and define it, through visual images or dialogue, in order to communicate with your audience.

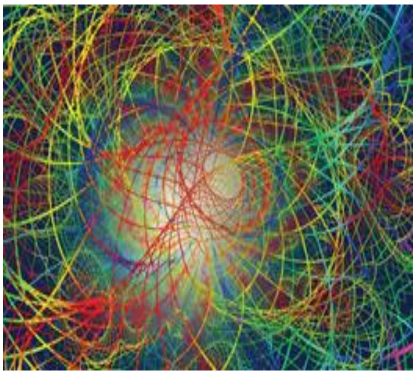
Words have two types of meanings: denotative and connotative.

Denotative – The common meaning, often found in the dictionary.

Connotative – Meaning that is not found in the dictionary but in the community of users itself. It can involve an emotional association with a word, positive or negative, and can be individual or collective, but is not universal.

With a common vocabulary in both denotative and connotative terms, effective communication becomes a more distinct possibility. But what if you have to transfer meaning from one vocabulary to another? That is essentially what you are doing when you translate a message. For example, HSBC Bank was forced to rebrand its entire global private banking operations after bringing a U.S. campaign overseas. In 2009, the worldwide bank spent millions of dollars to scrap its 5-year-old “Assume Nothing” campaign. Problems arose when the message was brought overseas, where it was translated in many countries as “Do Nothing.” In the end, the bank spent $10 million to change its tagline to “The world’s private bank,” which has a much friendlier translation.

2.5.2 Language is Abstract



Words represent aspects of our human environment, and can play an important role in that environment. They may describe an important idea or concept, but the very act of labelling and invoking a word simplifies and distorts your concept of the thing itself. This ability to simplify concepts makes it easier to communicate, but it sometimes makes you lose track of the specific meaning you are trying to convey through abstraction.

The ladder of abstraction is a model used to illustrate how language can range from concrete to abstract. If you follow a concept up the ladder of abstraction, more and more of the “essence” of the original object is lost or left out, which leaves more room for interpretation, which can lead to misunderstanding. This process of abstracting, of leaving things out, allows you to communicate more effectively because it serves as a shorthand that keeps you from having a completely unmanageable language filled with millions of words—each referring to one specific thing[8] (Hayakawa & Hayakawa, 1990). But it requires you to use context and often other words to generate shared meaning.

Some words are more directly related to a concept or idea than others. If you were asked to go and take a picture of a book, it might seem like a simple task. If you were asked to go and take a picture of “work,” you’d be puzzled because work is an abstract word that was developed to refer to any number of possibilities from the act of writing a book, to repairing an air conditioner, to fertilizing an organic garden. You could take a picture of any of those things, but you would be challenged to take a picture of “work.”

Consider the example of a cow.

If you were in a barn with this cow, you would actually be experiencing stimuli that would be coming in through your senses. You would hear the cow, likely smell the cow, and be able to touch the cow. You would perceive the actual ‘thing,’ which is the ‘cow’ in front of you. This would be considered concrete; it would be unmediated, meaning it was actually the moment of experience. As represented in Figure 2.2 below, the ladder of abstraction begins to move away from experience to language and description.

[8] Hayakawa, S. I., & Hayakawa, A. R. (1990). Language in thought and action. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

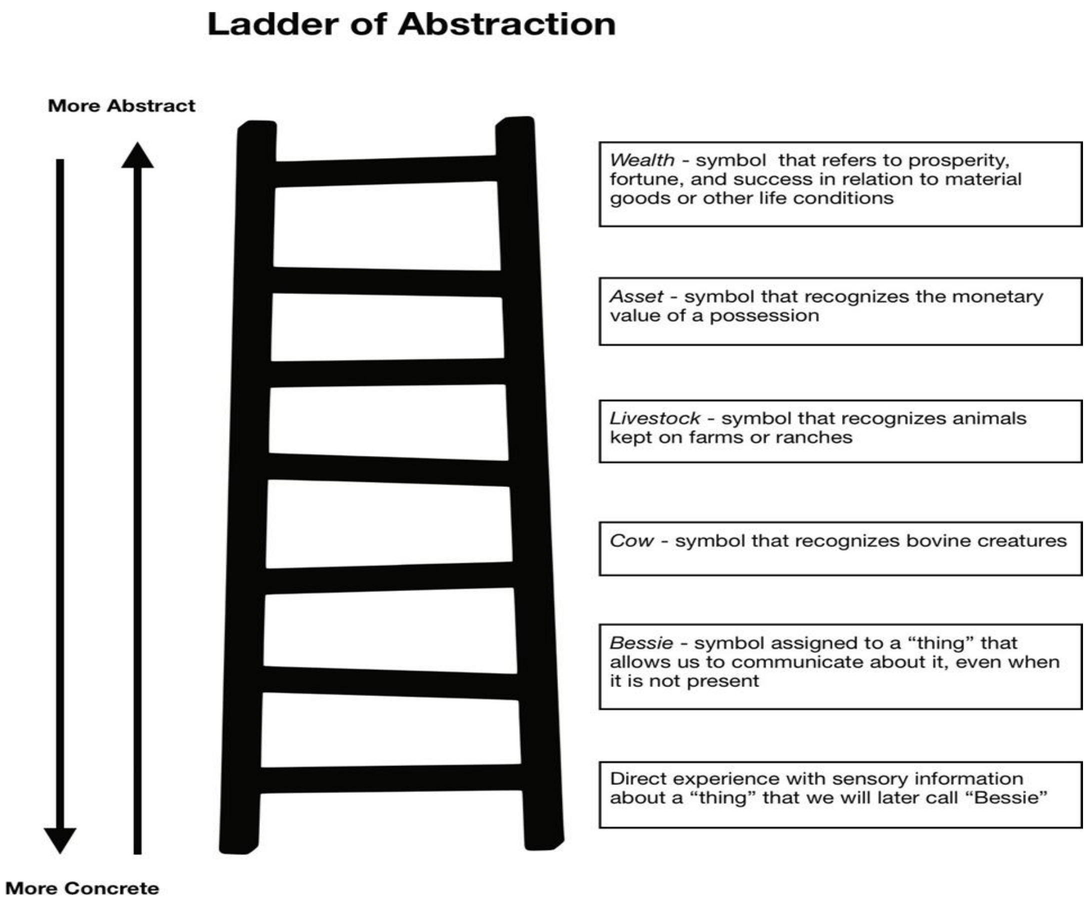


Figure 2.2. The Ladder of Abstraction. A ladder depicting increasing abstraction of observation and language (Hayakawa & Hayakawa, 1990).

As you move up a level on the ladder of abstraction, you might give your experience a name — you are looking at 'Bessie.' So now, instead of the direct experience with the 'thing' in front of you, you have given the thing a name, which takes you one step away from the direct experience toward the use of a more abstract symbol. Now you can talk and think about Bessie even when you aren't directly experiencing her.

At the next level, the word cow now lumps Bessie in with other bovine creatures that share similar characteristics. As you go up the ladder, cow becomes livestock, livestock becomes an asset, and then an asset becomes wealth.

Note that it becomes increasingly difficult to define the meaning of the symbol as you go up the ladder and how with each step you lose more of the characteristics of the original concrete experience.

2.5.3 Language Organizes and Classifies Reality

Humans use language to create and express some sense of order in their world. You often group words that represent concepts by their physical proximity or their similarity to one another. For example, in biology, animals with similar traits are classified together. An ostrich may be said to be related to an emu and a nandu, but you wouldn't group an ostrich with an elephant or a salamander. Your ability to organize is useful, but artificial. The systems of organization you use are not part of the natural world but an expression of your views about the natural world.

What is a doctor? A nurse? A teacher? If a male came to mind in the case of the word 'doctor' and a female came to mind in reference to 'nurse' or 'teacher', then your habits of mind include a gender bias. In many cultures, there was a time where gender stereotypes were more than just a stereotype; they were the gen- eral rule, the social custom, the norm. But now, in many places in the world, this is no longer true. More and more men are training to serve as nurses. In 2017, for example, data from the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) indicated that 41% of practising physicians in Canada were women (Canadian Medical Association, 2017).

You use systems of classification to help you navigate the world. Imagine how confusing life would be if you had no categories such as male/female, young/old, tall/short, doctor/nurse/teacher. While these categories are mentally useful, they can become problematic when you use them to uphold biases and ingrained assumptions that are no longer valid. You may assume, through your biases, that elements are related when they have no relationship at all. As a result, your thinking may become limited and your grasp of reality impaired. It is often easier to spot these biases in others, but it is important as an effective communicator to become aware of them in yourself. Holding biases unconsciously will limit your thinking, your grasp of reality, and your ability to communicate successfully.

2.6 LANGUAGE CAN BE AN OBSTACLE TO COMMUNICATION

In the past when you have used language to make sense of your experiences, and to take part in discussions, you no doubt came to see that language and verbal communication could work for you and sometimes against you. Language allowed you to communicate, but it also allowed you to miscommunicate and misunderstand.

In an article titled “The Miscommunication Gap,” Susan Washburn lists several undesirable results of poor communication in business:

- Damaged relationships
- Loss of productivity
- Inefficiency and rework
- Conflict
- Missed opportunities
- Schedule slippage (delays, missed deadlines)
- Scope creep…or leap (gradual or sudden changes in an assignment that make it more complex and difficult than it was originally understood to be)
- Wasted resources
- Unclear or unmet requirements

In the following section you will explore how words can serve either as a bridge, or a barrier, to understanding and communication of meaning. Your goals of effective and efficient business communication mean an inherent value of words and terms that keeps the bridge clear and free of obstacles. Review the six barriers to communication in Figure 2.3 as follows:

Cliché – cultural references that often make no sense in other cultures. For example, “A cliché is something to avoid like the plague, for it is nothing but a tired old war horse, and if the shoe were on the other foot you too would have an axe to grind.”

Jargon – An occupation-specific language used by people in a given profession. Jargon does not necessarily imply formal education, but instead focuses on the language people in a profession use to communicate with each other.

Slang – The use of existing or newly invented words to take the place of standard or traditional words with the intent of adding an unconventional, nonstandard, humorous, or rebellious effect. It differs from jargon in that it is used in informal contexts, among friends or members of a certain age group, rather than by professionals in a certain industry.

Euphemism – Involves substituting an acceptable word for an offensive, controversial, or unacceptable one that conveys the same or similar meaning.

Doublespeak – The deliberate use of words to disguise, obscures, or change meaning.

Offensive Language – Some language is offensive and has no place in the workplace. It may even be a violation of company policy.

Each of these six barriers to communication contributes to misunderstanding and miscommunication, intentionally or unintentionally. If you recognize one of them, you can address it right away. You can redirect a question and get to essential meaning, rather than leaving with a misunderstanding that might impact a business relationship. In business communication, your goal of clear and concise communication should remain constant. Never forget that trust is the foundation for effective communication.

Part of your effort must include reinforcing the relationship inherent between source and receiver. One effective step toward that goal is to reduce obstacles to effective communication. The more you can learn about your audience, the better you can tailor your chosen words. If you lack information or want your document to be understood by a variety of readers, it pays to use common words and avoid jargon. This is known as actively bridging communication to help ensure your audience clearly understands your intended message.

2.7 Improving Verbal Communication

In this chapter you have reviewed examples and stories that highlight the importance of verbal and written communication. To end the chapter, consider how language can be used to enlighten or deceive; encourage or discourage; empower or destroy. By defining the terms you use and choosing precise words, you will maximize your audience's understanding of your message. In addition, it is important to consider the audience, control your tone, check for understanding, and focus on results. Recognizing the power of verbal communication is the first step to understanding its role and impact on the communication process.

Define Your Terms	Be aware of any words you are using that may be unfamiliar to your audience. When you identify an unfamiliar word, your first decision is whether to use it or to substitute a more common, easily understood word.
Choose Precise Words	To increase understanding, choose precise words that provide the most accurate picture for your audience.

Consider Your Audience	Contextual clues are important to guide your audience as they read.
Control Tone	What kind of tone is best for your intended audience?
Check for Understanding	In oral communication, feedback is a core component of the communication model as we can often see it, hear it, and it takes less effort to assess it.
Be Results Oriented	It can be a challenge to balance the need for attention to detail with the need to arrive at the end product

Even when you are careful to craft your message clearly and concisely, not everyone will understand every word you say or write. As an effective business communicator, you know it is your responsibility to give your audience every advantage in understanding your meaning. Precise words, clear definitions, and contextual clues are important to guide your audience as they read. If you are speaking to a general audience and choose to use a word in professional jargon that may be understood by many but not all of the people in your audience, follow it by a common reference that clearly relates its essential meaning. With this positive strategy you will be able to forge relationships with audience members from diverse backgrounds.

Getting a handle on how to influence tone and to make your voice match your intentions takes time and skill. Make time for feedback and plan for it. Ask clarifying questions. Share your presentation with more than one person, and choose people that have similar characteristics to your anticipated audience. Lastly, finding balance while engaging in an activity that requires a high level of attention to detail can be challenge for any business communicator, but it is helpful to keep the end in mind.

The following two examples will provide you with ideas for increasing the precision of communication.

Example 1

Original – Bob left work.

Revised – Bob left work to go home at 5 pm.

Example 2

Original – Colleen presented a proposal.

Revised – Colleen, the marketing manager, presented a proposal on the marketing budget for next year.

2.8 LET US SUM UP

To summarize, messages are primary, secondary, and auxiliary. A message can be divided into a five-part structure composed of an attention statement, introduction, body, conclusion, and residual message. In order to improve communication, define your terms, choose precise words, consider your audience, control your tone, check for understanding, and aim for results. In order to defuse common obstacles to communication, avoid clichés, jargon, slang, sexist and racist language, euphemisms, and doublespeak.

2.9 FURTHER READING

- Toastmasters International – Public speaking tips: https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/public-speak- ing-tips
- Harvard psychology professor Steven Pinker is one of today's most innovative authorities on language.
- Explore reviews of books about language Pinker has published. http://stevenpinker.com/taxonomy/term/ 4265
- The "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King Jr. is one of the most famous speeches of all time. View it on video and read the text. http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm
- Visit Goodreads and learn about one of the most widely used style manuals, The Chicago Manual of Style. http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/103362.The_Chicago_Manual_of_Style

2.10 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Define language and describe its role in the communication process.
2. Describe how language shapes our experience of reality.
3. Give examples of how language can be a barrier to communication.
4. Give examples of message types and the parts of a message.
5. Explain the differences between clichés, jargon, and slang.
6. Demonstrate professional communication related to gender and race.
7. List six strategies for improving verbal communication.

Unit 3: YOU AND YOUR AUDIENCE

3

Unit Structure

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit students should be able to understand:

- Fundamental of Perception
- Role of Self-Understanding to Communication
- Getting to Know Your Audience
- Listening and Reading for Understanding

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit describes about fundamental of perception, what is role of self-understanding for effective communication, how to know your audience and listening and reading strategies for understanding.

3.3 PERCEPTION

Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information. This process, which is rep- resented in Figure 3.1 below, includes the perception of select stimuli that pass through your perceptual filters, are organized into your existing structures and patterns, and are then interpreted based on previous experiences. How you perceive the people and objects around you affects your communication. You respond differently to an object or person that you perceive favourably than you do to someone (or some- thing) you find unfavourable. But how do you filter through the mass amounts of incoming information, organize it, and make meaning from what makes it through your perceptual filters and into your social realities?

Figure 3.1. Selection, interpretation, and organization that contribute to perception.

3.3.1 Selecting Information

Most people take in information through their five senses, but your perceptual field (the world around you) includes so many stimuli that it is impossible for your brain to process and make sense of it all. So, as information comes in through your senses, various factors influence what actually continues on through the perception process[9]. Selecting is the first part of the perception process, in which you focus your attention on certain incoming sensory information. Think about how, out of many other possible stimuli to pay attention to, you may hear a familiar voice in the hallway, see a pair of shoes you want to buy from across the mall, or smell something cooking for dinner when you get home from work. You quickly cut through and push to the background all kinds of sights, smells, sounds, and other stimuli, but how do you decide what to select and what to leave out?

You tend to pay attention to information that is salient. Salience is the degree to which something attracts your attention in a particular context. The thing attracting your attention can be abstract, like a concept, or concrete, like an object. A bright flashlight shining in your face while camping at night is sure to be salient. The degree of salience depends on three features: (Fiske & Taylor, 1991) whether the object is visually or aurally stimulating, whether it meets your needs or interests, and whether it meets or challenges your expectations. Consider the image below: The Crashed Nike Ball Guerilla Marketing Example.

[9] Fiske, S. T., & Taylor, S. E. (1991). Social cognition (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill

Source: 18 of the Most Memorable Guerilla Marketing Campaigns

Related to salience, this example may be considered visually stimulating (it's quite large), it may be considered interesting, and it challenges most people's expectations in terms of size. The artwork is meant to stimulate one's imagination to question" why is the ball so large? What kind of large person (or monster perhaps) might have kicked it so hard it became embedded in the side of a building? This example represents an impossible scenario created through art that generates salience.

Visual and Aural Stimulation – It is probably not surprising to learn that visually and/or aurally stimulating things become salient in our perceptual field and get our attention.

Needs and Interests – We tend to pay attention to information that we perceive to meet our needs or interests in some way. We also find salient information that interests us.

Expectations – The relationship between salience and expectations is a little more complex. Basically, we can find expected things salient and find things that are unexpected salient.

As a communicator, you can use this knowledge about salience to your benefit by minimizing distractions when you have something important to say. It's probably better to have a serious conversation with a significant other in a quiet place rather than a crowded food court. Aside from minimizing distractions and delivering your messages enthusiastically, the content of your communication also affects salience. Whether a sign helps you find the nearest gas station, the sound of a ringtone helps us find your missing cell phone, or a speaker tells you how avoiding processed foods will improve your health, you select and attend to information that meets your needs.

Likely you have experienced the sensation of being engrossed in a television show, video game, or random project that you paid attention to at the expense of something that actually met your needs – like cleaning or spending time with a significant other. Paying attention to things that interest you but don't meet specific needs seems like the basic formula for procrastination that you might be familiar with.

If you are expecting a package to be delivered, you might pick up on the slightest noise of a truck engine or someone's footsteps approaching your front door. Since you expect something to happen, you may be extra tuned in to clues that it is coming. In terms of the unexpected, if you have a shy and soft-spoken friend who you overhear raising the volume and pitch of his voice while talking to another friend, you may pick up on that and assume that something out of the ordinary is going on. For something unexpected to become salient, it has to reach a certain threshold of difference. If you walked into your regular class and there were one or two more students there than normal, you may not even notice. If you walked into your class and there was someone dressed up as a wizard, you would probably notice. So, if you expect to experience something out of the routine, like a package delivery, you will find stimuli related to that expectation salient. If you experience something that you weren't expecting and that is significantly different from your routine experiences, then you will likely find it salient. You can also apply this concept to your communication.

Good instructors encourage their students to include supporting material in their speeches that defies audience expectations. You can help keep your audience engaged by employing good research skills to find such information.

Organizing Information

Organizing is the second part of the perception process, in which you sort and categorize information that you perceive based on innate and learned cognitive patterns. Three ways you sort things into patterns are by using proximity, similarity, and difference[10] (Coren & Girgus, 1980).

Proximity – In terms of proximity, we tend to think that things that are close together go together.

Similarity – We also group things together based on similarity. We tend to think similar-looking or similar- acting things belong together.

Difference – We also organize information that we take in based on difference. In this case, we assume that the item that looks or acts different from the rest doesn't belong with the group.

Since you often organize perceptual information based on proximity, you may automatically perceive that two people are together, just because they are standing close together in line.

This type of strategy for organizing information is so common that it is built into how you function in your daily life. If you think of the literal act of organizing something, like your desk at home or work, you follow these same strategies. If you have a bunch of papers and mail on the top of your desk, you will likely sort papers into separate piles for separate classes or put bills in a separate place than personal mail. You may have one drawer for pens, pencils, and other supplies and another drawer for files. In this case you are grouping items based on similarities and differences. You may also group things based on proximity, for example, by putting financial items like your check book, a calculator, and your pay stubs in one area so

[10] Coren, S., & Girgus, J. S. (1980). Principles of perceptual organization and spatial distortion: The gestalt illu- sions. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance, 6(3), 404-412. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0096-1523.6.3.404

you can update your budget easily. In summary, you simplify information and look for patterns to help conduct tasks and communicate efficiently in all aspects of your life.

Simplification and categorizing based on patterns isn’t necessarily a bad thing. In fact, without this capability you would likely not have the ability to speak, read, or engage in other complex cognitive/behavioral functions. There are differences among people, and looking for patterns helps you in many practical ways.

However, the judgments you might place on various patterns and categories are not natural; they are learned and culturally and contextually relative. Your perceptual patterns do become unproductive and even unethical when the judgments you associate with certain patterns are based on stereotypical or prejudicial thinking.

3.3.2 Interpreting Information

Although selecting and organizing incoming stimuli happens very quickly, and sometimes without much conscious thought, interpretation can be a much more deliberate and conscious step in the perception process. Interpretation is the third part of the perception process, in which you assign meaning to your experiences using mental structures known as schemata. Schemata are like databases of stored, related information that you use to interpret new experiences. Schemata are like lenses that help you make sense of the perceptual cues around you based on previous knowledge and experience.

It's important to be aware of schemata because your interpretations affect your behaviour. For example, if you are doing a group project for class and you perceive a group member to be shy based on your schema of how shy people communicate, you may avoid giving him or her presentation responsibilities because you do not think shy people make good public speakers. Schemata also guide your interactions, providing a script for your behaviours. Many people know how to act and communicate in a waiting room, in a classroom, on a first date, and on a game show. Even a person who has never been on a game show can develop a schema for how to act in that environment by watching The Price Is Right, for example.

A final example, you often include what you do for a living in your self-introduction, which then provides a schema through which others interpret your communication.

3.4 SELF UNDERSTANDING IS FUNDAMENTAL TO COMMUNICATION

You need to know what you want to say before you can say it to an audience. Understanding your perspective can lend insight to your awareness, the ability to be conscious of events and stimuli. Awareness determines what you pay attention to, how you carry out your intentions, and what you remember of your activities and experiences each day. Awareness is a complicated and fascinating area of study. The way we take in information, give it order, and assign it meaning has long interested researchers from disciplines including sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

Your perspective is a major factor in this dynamic process. Whether you are aware of it or not, you bring to the act of reading this sentence a frame of mind formed from experiences and education across your life- time. Learning to recognize how your perspective influences your thoughts is a key step in understanding yourself and preparing to communicate with others. In the image that follows there are two skydivers that seem to be having a lot of fun. That is their perspective. Perhaps skydiving might not be fun for everyone; it might be quite frightening to some.

3.4.1 Self-Concept

When you communicate, you are full of expectations, doubts, fears, and hopes. Where you place emphasis, what you focus on, and how you view your potential has a direct impact on your communication interactions. You gather a sense of self as you grow, age, and experience others and the world. Much of what you know about yourself you have learned through interaction with others.

The concept of the looking glass self explains that you see yourself reflected in other people's reactions to you and then form your self-concept based on how you believe other people see you[11]. This reflective process of building your self-concept is based on what other people have actually said, such as "You're a good listener," and other people's actions, such as coming to you for advice. These thoughts evoke emotional responses that feed into your self-concept. For example, you may think, "I'm glad that people can count on me to listen to their problems."

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[11] Cooley, C. (1922). Human nature and the social order (Rev. ed.). New York, NY: Scribners.

Carol Dweck, a psychology researcher at Stanford University, states that “something that seems like a small intervention can have cascading effects on things we think of as stable or fixed, including extroversion, openness to new experience, and resilience.” (Begley, 2008) [12]Your personality and expressions of it, like oral and written communication, were long thought to have a genetic component. But, says Dweck, “More and more research is suggesting that, far from being simply encoded in the genes, much of personality is a flexible and dynamic thing that changes over the life span and is shaped by experience.” (Begley, 2008) If you were told by someone that you were not a good listener, know this: You can change. You can shape your performance through experience, and a business communication course, a mentor at work, or even reading effective business communication authors can result in positive change.

In figure 3.2 below, the trio of the looking glass self is represented.

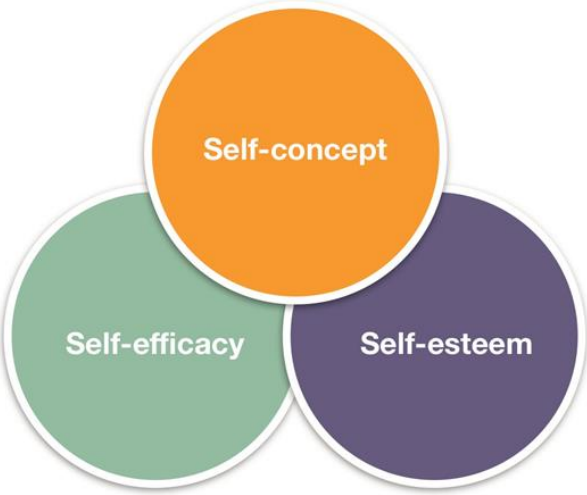

Figure 3.2 Self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.

3.4.2 Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

When you consider what makes you , the answers multiply as do the questions. As a baby, you learned to recognize that the face in the mirror was your face. But as an adult, you begin to wonder what and who you are. While you could explore the concept of self endlessly and philosophers have wrestled and will continue to wrestle with it, for your learning purpose, focus on self, which is defined as one’s own sense

[12] Begley, S. (2008, December 1). When DNA is not destiny. *Newsweek*, p. 14.

of individuality, motivations, and personal characteristics[13]. You also must keep in mind that this concept is not fixed or absolute; instead it changes as you grow and change across your lifetime.

One point of discussion useful for your study about yourself as a communicator is to examine your attitudes, beliefs, and values. These are all interrelated, and researchers have varying theories as to which comes first and which springs from another. You learn your values, beliefs, and attitudes through interaction with others.

An **attitude** is your immediate disposition toward a concept or an object. Attitudes can change easily and frequently. You may prefer vanilla while someone else prefers peppermint, but if someone tries to persuade you of how delicious peppermint is, you may be willing to try it and find that you like it better than vanilla.

Beliefs are ideas based on your previous experiences and convictions and may not necessarily be based on logic or fact. You no doubt have beliefs on political, economic, and religious issues. These beliefs may not have been formed through rigorous study, but you nevertheless hold them as important aspects of self.

Beliefs often serve as a frame of reference through which you interpret your world. Although they can be changed, it often takes time or strong evidence to persuade someone to change a belief.

Values are core concepts and ideas of what you consider good or bad, right or wrong, or what is worth the sacrifice. Your values are central to your self-image, what makes you who you are. Like beliefs, your values may not be based on empirical research or rational thinking, but they are even more resistant to change than are beliefs. To undergo a change in values, a person may need to undergo a transformative life experience.

3.4.3 Self-Image and Self-Esteem

Your self-concept is composed of two main elements: self-image and self-esteem. Your self-image is how you see yourself, how you would describe yourself to others. It includes your physical characteristics—your eye color, hair length, height, and so forth. It also includes your knowledge, experience, interests, and relationships. What

[13] McLean, S. (2003). *The basics of speech communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn Bacon.

is your image of yourself as a communicator? How do you feel about your ability to communicate? While the two responses may be similar, they indicate different things.

Your self-esteem is how you feel about yourself; your feelings of self-worth, self-acceptance, and self- respect. Healthy self-esteem can be particularly important when you experience a setback or a failure. High self-esteem will enable you to persevere and give yourself positive messages like "If I prepare well and try harder, I can do better next time."

Putting your self-image and self-esteem together yields your self-concept: your central identity and set of beliefs about who you are and what you are capable of accomplishing. When it comes to communicating, your self-concept can play an important part. You may find that communicating is a struggle, or the thought of communicating may make you feel talented and successful. Either way, if you view yourself as someone capable of learning new skills and improving as you go, you will have an easier time learning to be an effective communicator. Whether positive or negative, your self-concept influences your performance and the expression of that essential ability: communication.

3.4.4 Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

In a psychology experiment that has become famous through repeated trials, several public school teachers were told that specific students in their classes were expected to do quite well because of their intelligence[14]. These students were identified as having special potential that had not yet "bloomed." What the teachers didn't know was that these "special potential" students were randomly selected. That's right: as a group, they had no more special potential than any other students. Can you anticipate the outcome? As you may guess, the students lived up to their teachers' level of expectation. Even though the teachers were supposed to give appropriate attention and encouragement to all students, in fact they unconsciously communicated special encouragement verbally and nonverbally to the special

[14] Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, Winston.

potential students. And these students, who were actually no more gifted than their peers, showed significant improvement by the end of the school year. This phenomenon came to be called the “Pygmalion effect” after the myth of a Greek sculptor named Pygmalion, who carved a marble statue of a woman so lifelike that he fell in love with her—and in response to his love she did in fact come to life and marry him (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Insel & Jacobson, 1975).

In more recent studies, researchers have observed that the opposite effect can also happen: when students are seen as lacking potential, teachers tend to discourage them or, at a minimum, fail to give them adequate encouragement. As a result, the students do poorly[15,16,17]

When people encourage you, it affects the way you see yourself and your potential. Seek encouragement for your writing and speaking. Actively choose positive reinforcement as you develop your communication skills. You will make mistakes, but the important thing is to learn from them. Keep in mind that criticism should be constructive, with specific points you can address, correct, and improve. The concept of a self- fulfilling prophecy, in which someone’s behavior comes to match and mirror others’ expectations, is not new. Robert Rosenthal, a professor of social psychology at Harvard, observed four principles while studying this interaction between expectations and performance:

1. We form certain expectations of people or events.
2. We communicate those expectations with various cues, verbal and nonverbal.

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[15] Anyon, J. (1980, Fall). Social class and the hidden curriculum of work. J*ournal of Education*, *162*(1), 67–92.

[16] Oakes, J. (1985). Keeping track: How schools structure inequality. Birmingham, NY: Vail-Ballou Press.

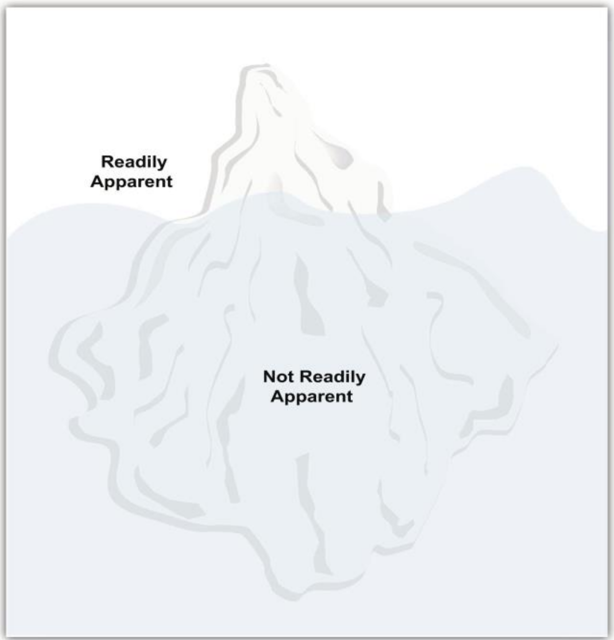
[17] Schugurensky, D. (Ed.). (2009). Selected moments of the 20th century. In History of education: A work inprogress. Department of Adult Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). Retrieved from http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_sc/assignment1/1968rosenjacob.html

3. People tend to respond to these cues by adjusting their behavior to match the expectations.
4. The outcome is that the original expectation becomes true.

3.5 GETTING TO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Writing to your audience's expectations is key to your success, but how do you get a sense of your readers? Research, time, and effort. At first glance you may think you know your audience, but if you dig a little deeper you will learn more about them and become a better speaker.

Figure 3.4, below is often called the iceberg model. When you see an iceberg on the ocean, the great majority of its size and depth lie below your level of visual awareness. When you write a document or give a presentation, each person in your reading or listening audience is like the tip of an iceberg. You may perceive people of different ages, races, ethnicities, and genders, but those are only surface characteristics. This is your challenge. When you communicate with a diverse audience, you are engaging in intercultural communication. The more you learn about the audience, the better you will be able to navigate the waters, and your communication interactions, safely and effectively.



Theodore Roosevelt pointed out that "the most important single ingredient in the formula of success is knowing how to get along with people." Knowing your audience well before you speak is essential. Here are a few questions to help guide you in learning more about your audience:

- How big is the audience?
- What are their backgrounds, gender, age, jobs, education, and/or interests?
- Do they already know about your topic? If so, how much?
- Will other materials be presented or available? If so, what are they, what do they cover, and how do they relate to your message?
- How much time is allotted for your presentation, or how much space do you have for your written document? Will your document or presentation stand alone or do you have the option of adding visuals, audio-visual aids, or links?

3.5.1 Demographic Traits

Demographic traits refer to the characteristics that make someone an individual, but that he or she has in common with others. Imagine that you are writing a report on the health risks associated with smoking. To get your message across to an audience of twelve-year-olds, clearly you would use different language and different examples than what you would use for an audience of adults age fifty-five and older.

3.5.2 Tailor your message to your audience

Source: Pixabay.com Public Domain

Writing for readers in the insurance industry, you would likely choose examples of how insurance claims are affected by whether or not a policyholder smokes, whereas if you were writing for readers who are athletes, you would focus on how the human body reacts to tobacco.

Audiences tend to be interested in messages that relate to their interests, needs, goals, and motivations. Demographic traits can give us insight into our audience and allow for an audience centred approach to your assignment that will make you a more effective communicator[18].

3.5.3 Improving Your Perceptions of Your Audience

The better you can understand your audience, the better you can tailor your communications to reach them. To understand them, a key step is to perceive clearly who they are, what they are interested in, what they need, and what motivates them. This ability to perceive is important with audience members from distinct groups, generations, and even cultures. William Seiler and Melissa Beall offer us six ways to improve our perceptions, and therefore improve our communication, particularly in public speaking; they are listed in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Perceptual Strategies for Success

Perceptual Strategy	Explanation
Become an active perceiver	You need to actively seek out as much information as possible. Placing yourself in the new culture, group, or co-culture can often expand your understanding.
Recognize that people, objects, and situations change	The world is changing and so is each individual. Recognizing that people and cultures, like communication process itself, are dynamic and ever changing can improve your intercultural communication
Become aware of the role perceptions play in communication	Perception is an important aspect of the communication process. By understanding that your perceptions are not the only ones possible can limit

[18] Beebe, S., & Beebe, S. (1997). *Public speaking: An audience-centered approach* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

	ethnocentrism and improve intercultural communication.
Keep an open mind	The adage “A mind is like a parachute—it works best when open” holds true. Being open to differences can improve intercultural communication.
Check your perceptions	By learning to observe, and acknowledging your perceptions, you can avoid assumptions, expand your understanding, and improve your ability to communicate across cultures.

3.5.4 Fairness in Communication

Consider that your audience has several expectations of you. No doubt you have sat through a speech or classroom lecture where you asked yourself, “Why should I listen?” You have probably been assigned to read a document or chapter and found yourself wondering, “What does this have to do with me?” These questions are normal and natural for audiences, but people seldom actually state these questions in so many words or say them out loud.

In a report on intercultural communication, V. Lynn Tyler offered insight into these audience expectations, which was summarized as the need to be fair to your audience. One key fairness principle is reciprocity, or a relationship of mutual exchange and interdependence. Reciprocity has four main components: mutuality, non-judgmentalism, honesty, and respect.

Mutuality means that the speaker searches for common ground and understanding with his or her audience, establishing this space and building on it throughout the speech. This involves examining viewpoints other than your own and taking steps to insure the speech integrates an inclusive, accessible format rather than an ethnocentric one.

Non-judgmentalism involves willingness to examine diverse ideas and viewpoints. A non-judgmental communicator is open-minded, and able to accept ideas that may be strongly opposed to his or her own beliefs and values.

Another aspect of fairness in communication is honesty: stating the truth as you perceive it. When you communicate honestly, you provide supporting and clarifying information and give credit to the sources where you obtained the information. In addition, if there is significant evidence opposing your viewpoint, you acknowledge this and avoid concealing it from your audience.

Finally, fairness involves respect for the audience and individual members recognizing that each person has basic rights and is worthy of courtesy. Consider these expectations of fairness when designing your message and you will more thoroughly engage your audience.

3.6 LISTENING AND READING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Learning to listen to your conversational partner, customer, supplier, or supervisor is an important part of business communication. Often, instead of listening you mentally rehearse what you want to say. Similarly, when you read, you are often trying to multitask and therefore cannot read with full attention. Inattentive listening or reading can cause you to miss much of what the speaker (or writer) is sharing with you.

Communication involves the sharing and understanding of meaning. To fully share and understand, practice active listening and reading so that you are fully attentive, fully present in the moment of interaction. Pay attention to both the actual words and for other clues to meaning, such as tone of voice or writing style.

Look for opportunities for clarification and feedback when the time comes for you to respond, not before.

3.6.1 Active Listening and Reading

You’ve probably experienced the odd sensation of driving somewhere and, having arrived, realized you don’t remember driving. Your mind may have been filled with other issues and you drove on autopilot. It’s dangerous when you drive like that, and it is dangerous in communication. Choosing to listen or read attentively takes effort. People communicate with words, expressions, and even in silence, and your attention to them will make you a better communicator. From discussions on improving customer service to retaining customers in challenging economic times, the importance of listening comes up frequently as a success strategy.

Here are some tips to facilitate active listening and reading:

- Maintain eye contact with the speaker; if reading, keep your eyes on the page.
- Don’t interrupt; if reading, don’t multitask.
- Focus your attention on the message, not your internal monologue.

- Restate the message in your own words and ask if you understood correctly.
- Ask clarifying questions to communicate interest and gain insight.

3.6.2 When the Going Gets Tough

Tips in this chapter will serve you well in daily interactions, but suppose you have an especially difficult subject to discuss, or you receive a written document delivering bad news. In a difficult situation like this, it is worth taking extra effort to create an environment and context that will facilitate positive communication.
Here are some strategies that may be helpful:

- Set aside a special time. To have a difficult conversation or read bad news, set aside a special time when you will not be disturbed. Close the door and turn off the TV, music player, and instant messaging client.
- Don't interrupt. Keep silent while you let the other person "speak his or her piece." If you are reading, make an effort to understand and digest the news without mental interruptions.
- Be non-judgmental. Receive the message without judgment or criticism. Set aside your opinions, attitudes, and beliefs.
- Be accepting. Be open to the message being communicated, realizing that acceptance does not necessarily mean you agree with what is being said.
- Take turns. Wait until it is your turn to respond, and then measure your response in proportion to the message that was delivered to you. Reciprocal turn-taking allows each person have her of his say.
- Acknowledge. Let the other person know that you have listened to the message or read it attentively.
- Understand. Be certain that you understand what your partner is saying. If you don't understand, ask for clarification. Restate the message in your own words.
- Keep your cool. Speak your truth without blaming. A calm tone will help prevent the conflict from escalating. Use "I" statements (e.g., "I felt concerned when I learned that my department is going to have a layoff") rather than "you" statements (e.g., "you want to get rid of some of our best people").
- Finally, recognize that mutual respect and understanding are built one conversation at a time. Trust is difficult to gain and easy to lose. Be patient and keep the channels of communication open, as a solution may develop slowly over

the course of many small interactions. Recognize that it is more valuable to maintain the relationship over the long term than to "win" in an individual transaction.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

To summarize, you can become a more effective communicator by understanding yourself and how others view you: your attitudes, beliefs, and values; your self-concept; and how the self-fulfilling prophecy may influence your decisions. As a presenter or communicator it's very important to understand your audience. You can learn about their demographic traits, such as age, gender, and employment status, as these help determine their interests, needs, and goals. In addition, you can become more aware of your perceptions and theirs, and practice fairness in your communications. The part of being an effective communicator is learning to receive messages from others through active listening and reading.

3.8 FURTHER READING

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3.9 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Define perception and explain ways in which you organize perceptual information.
2. Describe the terms self-concept and self-esteem.
3. Discuss how social norms, family, culture, and media influence self-perception.
4. Give examples of the effect of self-fulfilling prophecies.
5. List three ways to better understand and reach your audience.
6. Explain the importance of being an active listener and active reader.

Unit 4:NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

4

Unit Structure

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to understand

- Principles of non-verbal communication
- Types of non-verbal communication
- Role of movement in speech
- Strategies for non-verbal

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Nonverbal communication has a distinct history and serves separate evolutionary functions from verbal communication. For example, nonverbal communication is primarily biologically based while verbal communication is primarily culturally based. This is evidenced by the fact that some nonverbal communication has the same meaning across cultures while no verbal communication systems share that same universal recognisability (Andersen, 1999). Nonverbal communication also evolved earlier than verbal communication and served an early and important survival function that helped humans later develop verbal communication.

While some of our nonverbal communication abilities, like our sense of smell, lost strength as our verbal capacities increased, other abilities like paralanguage and movement have grown alongside verbal complexity. The fact that nonverbal communication is processed by an older part of our brain makes it more instinctual and involuntary than verbal communication.

4.3 PRINCIPLES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

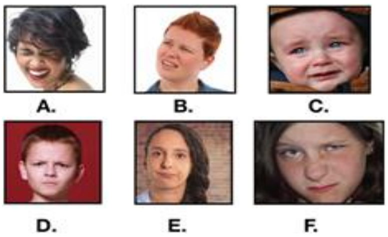
4.3.1 Nonverbal Communication Is Fluid

Chances are you have had many experiences where words were misunderstood, or where the meaning of words was unclear. When it comes to nonverbal communication, meaning is even harder to discern. You can sometimes tell what people are communicating through their nonverbal communication, but there is no fool proof “dictionary” of how to interpret nonverbal messages.

Nonverbal communication is the process of conveying a message without the use of words. It can include gestures and facial expressions, tone of voice, timing, posture and where you stand as you communicate. It can help or hinder the clear understanding of your message, but it doesn't reveal (and can even mask) what you are really thinking. Nonverbal communication is far from simple, and its complexity makes your study and your understanding a worthy but challenging goal.

Nonverbal communication involves the entire body, the space it occupies and dominates, the time it interacts, and not only what is not said, but how it is not said. Confused? Try to focus on just one element of nonverbal communication and it will soon get lost among all the other stimuli. Consider one element, facial expressions. What do they mean without the extra context of chin position, or eyebrows to flag interest or signal a threat? Nonverbal action flows almost seamlessly from one movement to the next, making it a challenge to interpret one element, or even a series of elements. How well can you correctly identify the feelings behind facial expressions?

The following series of images show people with a variety of facial expressions, what does each one represent?



Images source: Pixabay, Public Domain – the answer key is at the end of this section.

You may perceive time as linear, flowing along in a straight line. You do one task, you're doing another task now, and you are planning on doing something else all the time. Sometimes you place more emphasis on the future, or the past, forgetting that you are actually living in the present moment whether you focus on "the now" or not. Nonverbal communication is always in motion, as long as you are, and is never the same twice.

Nonverbal communication is irreversible. In written communication, you can write a clarification, correction, or retraction. While it never makes the original statement go completely away, it does allow for correction. Unlike written communication, oral communication may allow "do-overs" on the spot: you can explain and restate, hoping to clarify your point. In your experience, you've likely said something you would give anything to take back, and you've learned the hard way that you can't. Oral communication, like written communication, allows for some correction, but it still doesn't erase the original message or its impact.

Nonverbal communication takes it one step further. You can't separate one nonverbal action from the con- text of all the other verbal and nonverbal communication acts, and you can't take it back.

In a speech, nonverbal communication is continuous in the sense that it is always occurring, and because it is so fluid, it can be hard to determine where one nonverbal message starts and another stops. Words can be easily identified and isolated, but if you try to single out a speaker's gestures, smile, or stance without looking at how they all come together in context, you may miss the point and draw the wrong conclusion. You need to be conscious of this aspect of public speaking because, to quote an old saying, "Actions speak louder than words." This is true in the sense that people often pay more attention to your nonverbal expressions more than your words. As a result, nonverbal communication is a powerful way to contribute to (or detract from) your success in communicating your message to the audience.

Answer Key for Facial Recognition Activity – F: Disgusted; E: Annoyed; D: Angry; C: Sad; B: Confused; A: Joyful

4.3.2 Nonverbal Communication Is Fast

Nonverbal communication gives your thoughts and feelings away before you are even aware of what you are thinking or how you feel. People may see and hear more than you ever anticipated. Your nonverbal communication includes both intentional and unintentional messages, but since it all happens so fast, the unintentional ones can contradict what you know you are supposed to say or how you are supposed to react.

People tend to pay more attention to how you say something rather than what you actually say. You communicate nonverbally more than you engage in verbal communication, and often use nonverbal expressions to add to, or even replace, words you might otherwise say.

You use a nonverbal gesture called an illustrator to communicate your message effectively and reinforce your point. For example, you might use hand gestures to indicate the size or shape of an object to someone. Think about how you gesture when having a phone conversation, even though the other person can't see you, there's an important unconscious element to nonverbal communication.

Unlike gestures, emblems are gestures that have a specific agreed-on meaning, like when someone raises their thumb to indicate agreement. Many cultures have a variety of different non-verbal emblems.

In addition to illustrators or emblematic nonverbal communication, you also use regulators. "Regulators are nonverbal messages which control, maintain or discourage interaction"[19]. For example, if someone is telling you a message that is confusing or upsetting, you may hold up your hand, a commonly recognized regulator that asks the speaker to stop talking.

Let's say you are in a meeting presenting a speech that introduces your company's latest product. If your audience members nod their heads in agreement on important points and maintain good eye contact, it is a good sign. Nonverbally, they are using regulators encouraging you to continue with your presentation. In contrast, if they look away, tap their feet, and begin drawing in the margins of their notebook, these are regulators suggesting that you better think of a way to regain their interest or else wrap up your presentation quickly.

"Affect displays are nonverbal communication that express emotions or feelings" (McLean, 2003). An affect display that might accompany holding up your hand for silence would be to frown and shake your head from side to side. When you and a colleague are at a restaurant, smiling and waving at co-workers as they arrive lets them know where you are seated and welcomes them.

[19] McLean, S. (2003). *The basics of speech communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn Bacon.

"Adaptors are displays of nonverbal communication that help you adapt to your environment and each context, helping you feel comfortable and secure" (McLean, 2003). A self-adaptor involves you meeting your need for security, by playing with your hair for example, by adapting something about yourself in way for which it was not designed or for no apparent purpose. Combing your hair would be an example of a purposeful action, unlike a self-adaptive behavior.

An object-adaptor involves the use of an object in a way for which it was not designed. You may see audience members tapping their pencils, chewing on them, or playing with them, while ignoring you and your presentation. This is an example of an object-adaptor that communicates a lack of engagement or enthusiasm for your speech.

Intentional nonverbal communication can complement, repeat, replace, mask, or contradict what we say. When a friend invites you to join them for a meal, you may say "Yeah" and nod, complementing and repeating the message. You could have simply nodded, effectively replacing the "yes" with a nonverbal response. You could also have decided to say no, but did not want to hurt your friend's feelings. Shaking your head "no" while pointing to your watch, communicating work and time issues, may mask your real thoughts or feelings. Masking involves the substitution of appropriate nonverbal communication for potentially negative nonverbal communication you may want to display (McLean, 2003).

Finally, nonverbal messages that conflict with verbal communication can confuse the listener. Table 4.1 below summarizes these concepts.

Table 4.1 – Some Nonverbal Expressions

Term	Definition
Adaptors	Help us feel comfortable or indicate emotions or moods
Affect Displays	Express emotions or feelings
Complementing	Reinforcing verbal communication
Contradicting	Contradicting verbal communication
Emblems	Nonverbal gestures that carry a specific meaning, and can replace or reinforce words

Illustrators	Reinforce a verbal message
Masking	Substituting more appropriate displays for less appropriate displays
Object-adaptors	Using an object for a purpose other than its intended design
Regulators	Control, encourage or discourage interaction
Repeating	Repeating verbal communication
Replacing	Replacing verbal communication
Self-adaptors	Adapting something about yourself in a way for which it was not designed or for no apparent purpose

4.3.3 Nonverbal Communication Is Universal

Consider the many contexts in which interaction occurs during your day. In the morning, at work, after work, at home, with friends, or with family. Now consider the differences in nonverbal communication across these many contexts. When you are at work, do you jump up and down and say whatever you want? Why or why not? You may not engage in that behavior because of expectations at work, but the fact remains that from the moment you wake until you sleep, you are surrounded by nonverbal communication.

If you had been born in a different country, to different parents, and perhaps as a member of the opposite sex, your whole world would be quite different. Yet nonverbal communication would remain fairly consistent. It may not look exactly the same, or get used in exactly the same way, but it will still be nonverbal with all of its many functions and displays.

4.3.4 Nonverbal Communication Is Confusing and Contextual

Nonverbal communication can be confusing. You need contextual clues to help you understand, or begin to understand, what a movement, gesture (or lack of gestures) means. Then you have to figure it all out based on your prior knowledge (or lack thereof) of the person and hope to get it right. Talk about a challenge!

Nonverbal communication is everywhere, and you and everyone else uses it, but that doesn’t make it simple or independent of when, where, why, or how you communicate.

4.3.5 Nonverbal Communication Can Be Intentional or Unintentional

Suppose you are working as a salesclerk in a retail store, and a customer communicates frustration to you. Will the nonverbal aspects of your response be intentional or unintentional? Your job is to be pleasant and courteous at all times, yet your wrinkled eyebrows or wide eyes may have been unintentional. They clearly communicate your negative feelings at that moment. Restating your wish to be helpful and displaying non- verbal gestures may communicate “no big deal,” but the stress of the moment is still “written” on your face.

Can you tell when people are intentionally or unintentionally communicating nonverbally? Ask ten people this question and compare their responses. You may be surprised. It is clearly a challenge to understand nonverbal communication in action. You may assign intentional motives to nonverbal communication when in fact their display is unintentional, and often hard to interpret.

4.3.6 Nonverbal Messages Communicate Feelings and Attitudes

Albert Mehrabian asserts that we rarely communicate emotional messages through the spoken word. According to Mehrabian, 93 percent of the time we communicate our emotions nonverbally, with at least 55 percent of these nonverbal cues associated with facial gestures. Vocal cues, body position and movement, and normative space between speaker and receiver can also be clues to feelings and attitudes[20] (Mehrabian, 1972).

Is your first emotional response always an accurate and true representation of your feelings and attitudes, or does your emotional response change across time? You are changing all the time, and sometimes a moment of frustration or a flash of anger can signal to the receiver a feeling or emotion that existed for a moment, but has since passed. Their response to your communication will be based on that perception, even though you might already be over the issue.

4.3.7 Nonverbal Communication Is Key in the Speaker/Audience Relationship

When you first see another person, before either of you says a word, you are already reading nonverbal signals. Within the first few seconds you have made judgments about the other based on what they wear, their physical characteristics, even their

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[20] Mehrabian A.(1972). Nonverbal communication, Chicago, IL; Aldine Atherton

posture. Are these judgments accurate? That is hard to know without context, but it is clear that nonverbal communication affects first impressions, for better or worse.

When a speaker and an audience first meet, nonverbal communication in terms of space, dress, and even personal characteristics can contribute to assumed expectations. The expectations might not be accurate or even fair, but it is important to recognize that they will be present. There is truth in the saying, “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” Since first impressions are quick and fragile, your attention to aspects you can control, both verbal and nonverbal, will help contribute to the first step of forming a relationship with your audience. Your eye contact with audience members, use of space and degree of formality will continue to contribute to that relationship.

As a speaker, your nonverbal communication is part of the message and can contribute to, or detract from, your overall goals. By being aware of that physical communication, and practicing with a live audience, you can learn to be more aware and in control.

4.4 TYPES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Now that you have learned about the general principles that apply to nonverbal communication, here are eight types of nonverbal communication to further understand this challenging aspect of communication:

- Space
- Time
- Physical characteristics
- Body movements
- Touch
- Paralanguage
- Artifacts
- Environment

4.4.1 Space

When we discuss space in a nonverbal context, we mean the space between objects and people. Space is often associated with social rank and is an important part of business communication. Who gets the corner office? Why is the head of the table important and who gets to sit there?

People from diverse cultures may have different normative space expectations. If you are from a large urban area, having people stand close to you may be normal. If you are from a rural area or a culture where people expect more space, someone may be standing "too close" for comfort and not know it.

Territory is related to control. As a way of establishing control over your own room, maybe you painted it your favourite color, or put up posters that represent your interests or things you consider unique about yourself. Families or households often mark their space by putting up fences or walls around their houses. This sense of a right to control your space is implicit in territory. Territory means the space you claim as your own, are responsible for, or are willing to defend.

Among most humans there is a basic need for personal space, but the normative expectations for space vary greatly by culture. You may perceive that in your home people sleep one to each bed, but in many cultures people sleep two or more to a bed and it is considered normal. If you were to share that bed, you might feel uncomfortable, while someone raised with group sleeping norms might feel uncomfortable sleeping alone. From where you stand in an aerobics class in relation to others, to where you place your book bag in class, your personal expectations of space are often at variance with others.

4.4.2 Time

Do you know what time it is? How aware you are of time varies by culture and normative expectations of adherence (or ignorance) of time. Some people, and the communities and cultures they represent, are very time-oriented. When you give a presentation, does your audience have to wait for you? Time is a relevant factor of the communication process in your speech. The best way to show your audience respect is to honor the time expectation associated with your speech. Always try to stop speaking before the audience stops listening; if the audience perceives that you have "gone over time," they will be less willing to listen. This in turn will have a negative impact on your ability to communicate your message.

4.4.3 Physical Characteristics

You didn't choose your genes, your eye color, the natural color of your hair, or your height, but people spend millions every year trying to change their physical characteristics. You can get colored contacts; dye your hair; and if you are shorter than you'd like to be, buy shoes to raise your stature a couple of inches.

However, no matter how much you stoop to appear shorter, you won't change your height until time and age gradually makes itself apparent. If you are tall, you might find the correct shoe size, pant length, or even the length of mattress a challenge, but there are rewards.

Regardless of your eye or hair color, or even how tall you are, being comfortable with yourself is an important part of your presentation. Act naturally and consider aspects of your presentation you can control in order to maximize a positive image for the audience.

4.4.4 Body Movements

The study of body movements, called kinesics, is key to understanding nonverbal communication.

Body movements can complement the verbal message by reinforcing the main idea. For example, you may be providing an orientation presentation to a customer about a software program. As you say, "Click on this tab," you may also initiate that action. Your verbal and nonverbal messages reinforce each other. You can also reinforce the message by repeating it. If you first say, "Click on the tab," and then motion with your hand to the right, indi- cating that the customer should move the cursor arrow with the mouse to the tab, your repetition can help the listener understand the message.

In addition to repeating your message, body movements can also regulate conversations. Nodding your head to indicate that you are listening may encourage the customer to continue asking questions. Holding your hand up, palm out, may signal them to stop and provide a pause where you can start to answer.

Body movements also substitute or replace verbal messages. For example, if the customer makes a face of frustration while trying to use the software program, they may need assistance. If they push away from the computer and separate themselves physically from interacting with it, they may be extremely frustrated.

Learning to gauge feelings and their intensity as expressed by customers takes time and patience, and your attention to them will improve your ability to facilitate positive interactions.

4.4.5 Touch

Before giving your presentation, you may interact with people by shaking hands and making casual conversation. This interaction can help establish trust before you take the stage. Once on stage, most people do not touch audience members physically, but you can interact with audience members through visual aids, note cards, and other objects.

4.4.6 Paralanguage

Paralanguage is the exception to the definition of nonverbal communication. You may recall that nonverbal communication was defined as “not involving words” but paralanguage is a unique form of nonverbal communication that exists when we are speaking, using words. Paralanguage involves tone and nonverbal aspects of speech that influence meaning, including how loudly or softly you are speaking, intensity, pausing, and even silence.

Perhaps you’ve also heard of a pregnant pause, a silence between verbal messages that is full of meaning. The meaning itself may be hard to understand or decipher, but it is there nonetheless. For example, your co-worker Jan comes back from a sales meeting speechless. You may ask if the meeting went all right. “Well, ahh…” may be the only response you get. The pause speaks volumes. Something happened, though you may not know what.

Silence or vocal pauses can communicate hesitation, indicate the need to gather thought, or serve as a sign of respect. Sometimes we learn just as much, or even more, from what a person does not say as what they do say.

4.4.7 Artifacts

Do you cover your tattoos when you are at work? Do you know someone who does? Or perhaps you know someone who has a tattoo and does not need to cover it up on their job? Expectations vary a great deal, and body art or tattoos may still be controversial in the workplace. In your line of work, a tattoo might be an important visual aid, or it might detract from your effectiveness as a business communicator. Body piercings may express individuality, but you need to consider how they will be interpreted by employers and customers.

Artifacts are forms of decorative ornamentation that are chosen to represent self-concept. They can include rings and tattoos, but may also include brand names and logos. From clothes to cars, watches, briefcases, purses, and even eyeglasses, what we choose to surround ourselves with communicates something about our sense of self. Artifacts may project gender, role or position, class or status, personality, and group membership or affiliation. Paying attention to a customer's artifacts can give you a sense of the self they want to communicate, and may allow you to more accurately adapt your message to meet their needs.

4.4.8 Environment

Environment involves the physical and psychological aspects of the communication context. More than the tables and chairs in an office, environment is an important part of the dynamic communication process. The perception of one's environment influences one's reaction to it. For example, Google is famous for its work environment, with spaces created for physical activity and even in-house food service around the clock. The expense is no doubt considerable, but Google's actions speak volumes. In Google's view, the results produced in the environment, designed to facilitate creativity, interaction, and collaboration, are worth the effort.

4.5 MOVEMENT IN SPEECH

At some point in your business career you will be called upon to give a speech. It may be to an audience of one on a sales floor, or to a large audience at a national meeting. You already know you need to make a positive first impression, but do you know how to use movement in your presentation? In this section we'll examine several strategies for movement and their relative advantages and disadvantages.

Customers and audiences respond well to speakers who are comfortable with themselves. Comfortable doesn't mean overconfident or cocky, and it doesn't mean shy or timid. It means that an audience is far more likely to for- give the occasional "umm" or "ahh," or the nonverbal equivalent of a misstep, if the speaker is comfortable with themselves and their message.

Let's start with behaviors to avoid. Who would you rather listen to: a speaker who moves confidently across the stage or one who hides behind the podium; one who expresses herself nonverbally with purpose and meaning or one who crosses his arms or clings to the lectern?

Audiences are most likely to respond positively to open, dynamic speakers who convey the feeling of being at ease with their bodies. The setting, combined with audience expectations, will give a range of movement. If you are speaking at a formal event, or if you are being covered by a stationary camera, you may be expected to stay in one spot. If the stage allows you to explore, closing the distance between yourself and your audience may prove effective. Rather than focus on a list of behaviors and their relationship to environment and context, give emphasis to what your audience expects and what you yourself would find more engaging instead.

The questions are, again, what does your audience consider appropriate and what do you feel comfortable doing during your presentation? Since the emphasis is always on meeting the needs of the customer, whether it is an audience of one on a sales floor or a large national gathering, you may need to stretch out- side your comfort zone. On that same note, don't stretch too far and move yourself into the uncomfortable range. Finding balance is a challenge, but no one ever said giving a speech was easy.

Movement is an important aspect of your speech and requires planning, the same as the words you choose and the visual aids you design. Be natural, but do not naturally shuffle your feet, pace back and forth, or rock on your heels through your entire speech. These behaviors distract your audience from your message and can communicate nervousness, undermining your credibility.

4.5.1 Gestures

Gestures involve using your arms and hands while communicating. Gestures provide a way to channel your nervous energy into a positive activity that benefits your speech and gives you something to do with your hands. For example, watch people in normal, everyday conversations. They frequently use their hands to express themselves. Do you think they think about how they use their hands? Most people do not. Their arm and hand gestures come naturally as part of their expression, often reflecting what they have learned within their community.

For professional speakers this is also true, but deliberate movement can reinforce, repeat, and even regulate an audience's response to their verbal and nonverbal messages. You want to come across as comfortable and natural, and your use of your arms and hands contributes to your presentation. We can easily recognize that a well-chosen gesture can help make a point memorable or lead the audience to the next point.

As professional speakers lead up to a main point, they raise their hand slightly, perhaps waist high, often called an anticipation step. The gesture clearly shows the audience your anticipation of an upcoming point, serving as a nonverbal form of foreshadowing.

The implementation step, which comes next, involves using your arms and hands above your waist. By holding one hand at waist level pointing outward, and raising it up with your palm forward, as in the "stop" gesture, you signal the point. The nonverbal gesture complements the spoken word, and as students of speech have noted across time, audiences respond to this nonverbal reinforcement. You then slowly lower your hand down past your waistline and away from your body, letting go of the gesture, and signalling your transition.

The relaxation step, where the letting go motion complements your residual message, concludes the motion.

4.5.2 Facial Gestures

As you progress as a speaker from gestures and movement, you will need to turn your attention to facial gestures and expressions. Facial gestures involve using your face to display feelings and attitudes nonverbally. They may reinforce, or contradict, the spoken word, and their impact cannot be underestimated. As in other body movements, your facial gestures should come naturally, but giving them due thought and consideration can keep you aware of how you are communicating the nonverbal message.

Facial gestures should reflect the tone and emotion of your verbal communication. If you are using humor in your speech, you will likely smile to complement the amusement expressed in your words. Smiling will be much less appropriate if your presentation involves a serious subject such as cancer or car accidents. Con- sider how you want your audience to feel in response to your message, and identify the facial gestures you can use to promote those feelings. Then practice in front of a mirror so that the gestures come naturally.

Eye contact refers to the speaker's gaze that engages the audience members. It can vary in degree and length, and in many cases, is culturally influenced. Both in the speaker's expectations and the audience member's notion of what is appropriate will influence normative expectations for eye contact. In some cultures, there are understood behavioral expectations for male gaze directed toward females, and vice versa. In a similar way, children may have expectations of when to look their elders in the eye, and when to gaze down. Depending on the culture, both may be nonverbal signals of listening. Understanding your audience is critical when it comes to nonverbal expectations.

When giving a presentation, avoid looking over people's heads, staring at a point on the wall, or letting your eyes dart all over the place. The audience will find these mannerisms unnerving. They will not feel as con- nected, or receptive, to your message and you will reduce your effectiveness. Move your eyes gradually and naturally across the audience, both close to you and toward the back of the room. Try to look for faces that look interested and engaged in your message. Do not to focus on only one or two audience members, as audiences may respond negatively to perceived favouritism. Instead, try to give as much eye contact as possible across the audience. Keep it natural, but give it deliberate thought.

4.6 Nonverbal Strategies

Nonverbal communication is an important aspect of business communication, from the context of an interpersonal interaction to a public presentation. It is a dynamic, complex, and challenging aspect of communication. You are never done learning and adapting to your environment and context, and improving your understanding of nonverbal communication comes with the territory.

When your audience first sees you, they begin to make judgments and predictions about you and your potential, just as an employer might do when you arrive for a job interview. If you are well dressed and every crease is ironed, your audience may notice your attention to detail. Wearing jeans with holes, a torn T-shirt, and a cap would send a different message. Neither style of dress is “good” or “bad, but simply appropriate or inappropriate depending on the environment and context. Your skills as an effective business communicator will be called upon when you contemplate your appearance. As a speaker, your goal is to create common ground and reduce the distance between the audience and yourself. You want your appearance to help establish and reinforce your credibility.

In order to be a successful business communicator, you will need to continually learn about nonverbal communication and its impact on your interactions. Below are three ways to examine nonverbal communication.

4.6.1 Watch Reactions

Market research is fundamental to success in business and industry. So, too, you will need to do a bit of field research to observe how, when, and why people communicate the way they do. If you want to be able to communicate effectively with customers, you will need to anticipate not only their needs, but also how they communicate. They are far more likely to communicate with someone whom they perceive as being like them, than with a perceived stranger. From dress to mannerisms and speech patterns, you can learn from your audience how to be a more effective business communicator.

4.6.2 Enroll an Observer

Most communication in business and industry involves groups and teams, even if the interpersonal context is a common element. Enroll a co-worker or colleague in your effort to learn more about your audience, or even yourself. They can observe your presentation and note areas you may not have noticed that could benefit from revision. Perhaps the gestures you make while speaking tend to distract rather than enhance your presentations. You can also record a video of your performance and play it for them, and yourself, to get a sense of how your nonverbal communication complements or detracts from the delivery of your message.

4.6.3 Focus on a Specific Type of Nonverbal Communication

What is the norm for eye contact where you work? Does this change or differ based on gender, age, ethnicity, cultural background, context, and environment? Observation will help you learn more about how people communicate; looking for trends across a specific type of nonverbal communication can be an effective strategy. Focus on one behaviour you exhibit on your videotape, like pacing, body movements across the stage, hand gestures as you are making a point, or eye contact with the audience.

Use nonverbal communication to enhance your message, watch reactions and consider enrolling an observer to help you become aware of your nonverbal habits and how your audience receives nonverbal messages.

4.7 LET US SUM UP

Finally we can summarize that nonverbal communication is the process of conveying a message without the use of words; it relates to the dynamic process of communication, the perception process and listening, and verbal communication. Nonverbal communication is fluid and fast, universal, confusing, and contextual. It can add to or replace verbal communication and can be intentional or unintentional. Nonverbal communication communicates feelings and attitudes, and people tend to believe nonverbal messages more than verbal ones. Nonverbal communication can be categorized into eight types: space, time, physical characteristics, body movements, touch, paralanguage, artifacts, and environment. Also use movement strategically in your presentation, keep it natural and consider using facial gestures, and natural eye contact.

4.8 FURTHER READING

- Visit this site for a library of University of California videotapes on nonverbal communication produced by Dane Archer of the University of California at Santa Cruz. http://nonverbal.ucsc.edu
- Read "Six Ways to Improve Your Nonverbal Communications" by Vicki Ritts, St. Louis Community College at Florissant Valley and James R. Stein, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. http://www.comprofes-sor.com/2011/02/six-ways-to-improve-your-nonverbal.html
- Is "how you say it" really more important than what you say? Read an article by communications expert Dana Bristol-Smith that debunks a popular myth. http://www.sideroad.com/Public_Speaking/how-you- say-not-more-important-what-you-say.html

4.9 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Give examples of nonverbal communication and describe its role in the communication process.
2. Explain the principles of nonverbal communication.
3. Describe the similarities and differences among eight general types of nonverbal communication.
4. Demonstrate how to use movement to increase the effectiveness of your message.
5. Demonstrate three ways to improve nonverbal communication.

4.10 ACTIVITIES

1. Watch a television program without the sound. Can you understand the program? Write a description of the program and include what you found easy to understand, and what presented a challenge, and pre- sent it to the class.
2. Interview someone from a different culture than your own (explaining your purpose clearly) and ask them to share a specific cultural difference in nonverbal communication—for example, a nonverbal ges- ture that is not used in polite company.

Block-2

Presentation Skills

Unit 1:PRESENTATION ORGANIZATION

1

Unit Structure

1.1. Learning Objectives

1.2. Introduction

1.3. Rhetorical Situation

1.4. Strategies for Success

1.5. The 9 Cognate Strategies

1.6. Purpose and Central Idea Statements

1.7. Research

1.8. Organizational Models for Presentations

1.9. Outlining Your Presentation

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1.11. Let us sum up

1.12. Check your Progress: Possible Answers

1.13. Further Reading

1.14. Assignments

1.15. Activities

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter students will be able to understand:

- Definition of Rhetorical Situation
- What are strategies for success
- Main 9 Cognates strategies
- Purpose and central idea statements
- Research
- Organizational models for presentation
- Transition

1.2 INTRODUCTION

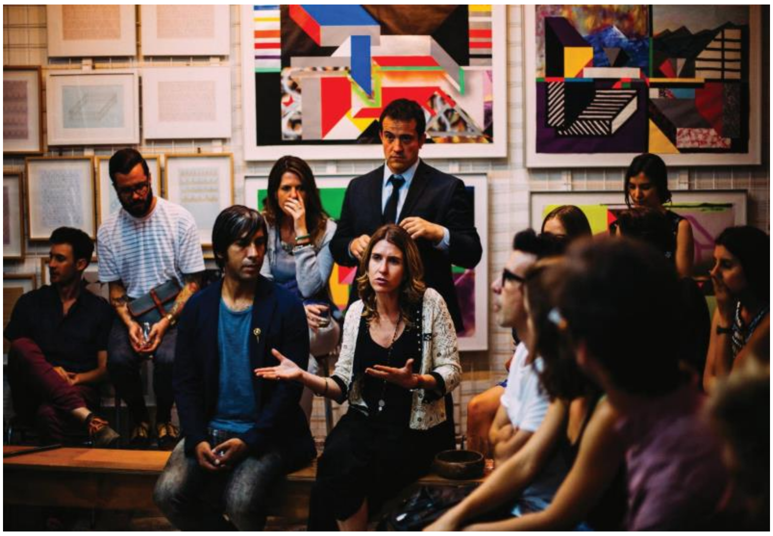
This chapter will help you consider how to organize the information to prepare for a presentation. While knowledge on your topic is key to an effective presentation, do not underestimate the importance of organization.

Organization in any presentation is helpful both to you and to your audience. They will appreciate receiving the information presented in an organized way, and being well organized will make the presentation much less stressful for you.

A successful presentation involves flexibility and organization. You know your material. You are prepared and follow an outline. You do not read a script or PowerPoint presentation, you do not memorize every single word in order (though some parts may be memorized), but you also do not make it up as you go along. Your presentation is scripted in the sense that it is completely planned from start to finish, yet every word is not explicitly planned, allowing for some spontaneity and adaptation to the audience's needs in the moment.

Your organization plan will serve you and your audience as a guide, and help you present a more effective speech. Just as there is no substitute for practice and preparation, there is no substitute for organization and an outline when you need it the most: on stage.

1.3 RHETORICAL SITUATION



In the classical tradition, the art of public speaking is called rhetoric; the circumstances in which you give your speech or presentation are the rhetorical situation. The audience gives you the space and time as a speaker to fulfil your role and, hopefully, their expectations. Just as a group makes a leader, an audience makes a speaker. By looking to your audience, you shift your attention from an internal focus (you) to an external (them/others) emphasis. Several of the first questions any audience member asks himself or herself are, “Why should I listen to you?” “What does what you are saying have to do with me?” and “How does this help me?” Generating interest in your speech is the first step as you guide perception through selection, organization, and interpretation of content and ways to communicate your point.

The rhetorical situation involves three elements: the set of expectations inherent in the context, audience, and the purpose of your presentation[21] . This means you need to consider, in essence, the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of your speech from the audience’s perspective. Figure 5.1 below demonstrates the three-part set of expectations in the rhetorical situation.

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[21] Kostelnick, C., & Roberts, D. (1998). Designing visual language: Strategies for professional communicators. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn Bacon.

Fig. 5.1 Context, Audience, and Purpose. Your presentation depends on your knowledge of these three elements of rhetoric.

1.3.1 Context

Your presentation is given in a space that has connection to the rest of the world. The space you're presenting in, the time of day, and even the events going on in the world around you and your audience will affect the decisions you make in preparing for your presentation.

1.3.2 Audience

The receiver (i.e., listener or audience) is one of the basic components of communication. Your audience comes to you with expectations, prior knowledge, and experience. They have a wide range of characteristics like social class, gender, age, race and ethnicity, cultural background, and language that make them unique and diverse. What kind of audience will you be speaking to? What do you know about their expectations, prior knowledge or backgrounds, and how they plan to use your information? Giving attention to this aspect of the rhetorical situation will allow you to gain insight into how to craft your message before you present it.

1.3.3 Purpose

A presentation may be designed to inform, demonstrate, persuade, motivate, or even entertain. The purpose of your speech is central to its formation. You should be able to state your purpose in one sentence or less, much like an effective thesis statement in an essay.

1.4 STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Given the diverse nature of audiences, the complexity of the communication process, and the countless options and choices to make when preparing your presentation, you may feel overwhelmed. One effective way to address this is to focus on ways to reach, interact, or stimulate your audience. Charles Kostelnick and David Roberts outline several cognate strategies, or ways of framing, expressing, and representing a message to an audience, in Designing Visual Language: Strategies for Professional Communicators (Kostelnick & Roberts, 1998). The word "cognate" refers to knowledge, and these strategies are techniques to impart knowledge to your audience. They help answer questions like "Does the audience understand how I'm arranging my information?" "Am I emphasizing my key points effectively?" and "How does my expression and representation of information contribute to a relationship with the audience?" They can serve you to better anticipate and meet your audience's basic needs.

Table 5.1 summarizes the nine cognate strategies in relation to Aristotle's forms of rhetorical proof; it also provides areas on which to focus your attention as you design your message.

Aristotle's Forms of Rhetorical Proof	Cognate Strategies	Focus
Pathos	• Tone • Emphasis • Engagement	• Expression • Relevance • Relationship
Logos	• Clarity • Conciseness • Arrangement	• Clear understanding • Key points • Order, hierarchy, placement
Ethos	• Credibility • Expectation • Reference •	• Character, trust • Norms and anticipated outcomes • Sources and frames of reference

Aristotle outlined three main forms of rhetorical proof: ethos, logos, and pathos. Ethos involves the speaker's character and expertise. Logos is the logic of the speaker's presentation—something that will be greatly enhanced by a good organizational plan. Aristotle discussed pathos as the use of emotion as a persuasive element in the speech [22], or "the arousing of emotions in the audience." If you use pathos in a strategic way, you are following Aristotle's notion of rhetorical proof as the available means of persuasion. If logic and expertise don't move the audience, a tragic picture may do so.

The cognate strategies are in many ways expressions of these three elements, but by focusing on individual characteristics, can work towards being more effective in their preparation and presentation. Many of these strategies build on basic ideas of communication, such as verbal and nonverbal delivery. By keeping that in mind, you'll be more likely to see the connections and help yourself organize your presentation effectively.

You'll want to consider the cognate strategies and how to address each area to make your speech as effective as possible, given your understanding of the rhetorical situation.

1.5 THE 9 COGNATE STRATEGIES

1. Tone

Your choice of words, your clothing, your voice, body language, the rhythm and cadence of your speech, the use of space – these all contribute to the tone of the presentation. Tone, or the general manner of expression of the message, will contribute to the context of the presentation.

2. Emphasis

As the speaker, you need to consider how you place emphasis—stress, importance, or prominence—on some aspects of your speech, and how you lessen the impact of others. Emphasis as a

[22] Wisse, J. (1989). Ethos and pathos: From Aristotle to Cicero. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Adolph M. Hakkert.

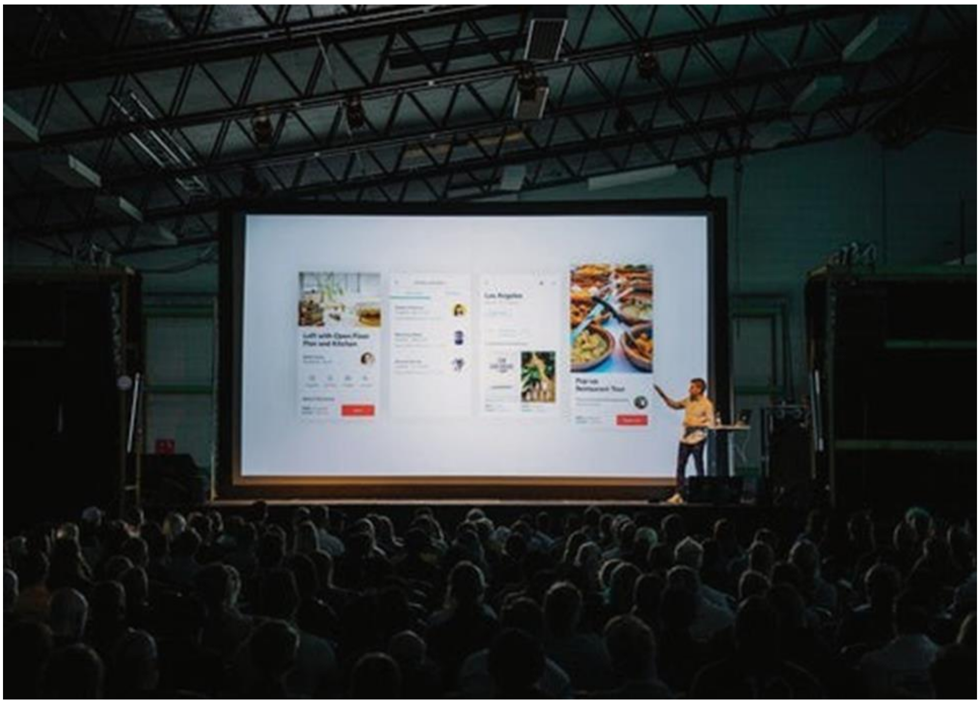
cognate strategy asks you to consider relevance, and the degree to which your focal point of attention contributes to or detracts from your speech. You will need to consider how you link ideas through transitions, how you repeat and rephrase, and how you place your points in hierarchical order to address the strategy of emphasis in your presentation.

3. Engagement

Engagement is the relationship the speaker forms with the an audience. Engagement strategies can include eye contact, movement within your space, audience participation, use of images and even the words you choose. To develop the relationship with the audience, you will need to consider how your words, visuals, and other relevant elements of your speech help this relationship grow.

4. Clarity

“Clarity strategies help the receiver (audience) to decode the message, to understand it quickly and completely, and when necessary, to react without ambivalence” (Kostelnick, C. and Roberts, D., 1998). Your word choices and visual elements should be chosen carefully, and used together appropriately, to ensure you’re conveying the right meaning. In figure 5.2 below the image demonstrates how difficult it can be to see dense graphics in a large presentation setting.



5. **Being Concise**

Being concise is part of being clear – it refers to being brief and direct in the visual and verbal delivery of your message, and avoiding unnecessary intricacy. It involves using as many words as necessary to get your message across, and no more. If you only have five to seven minutes, how will you budget your time? Being economical with your time is a pragmatic approach to ensuring that your attention, and the attention of your audience, is focused on the point at hand.

6. **Arrangement**

As the speaker, you will gather and present information in some form. How that form follows the function of communicating your message involves strategically grouping information. "Arrangement means order, the organization of visual (and verbal) elements" (Kostelnick & Roberts, 1998) in ways that allow the audience to correctly interpret the structure, hierarchy, and relationships among points of focus in your presentation.

7. **Credibility**

You will naturally develop a relationship with your audience, and the need to make trust an element is key to that development. The word “credibility” comes from the word “credence,” or belief. Credibility involves your qualities, capabilities, or power to elicit from the audience belief in your character. Consider persuasive strategies that will appeal to your audience, build trust, and convey your understanding of the rhetorical situation.

8. Expectation

Your audience, as we’ve addressed previously, will have inherent expectations of themselves and of you depending on the rhetorical situation. Expectations involve the often unstated, eager anticipation of the norms, roles and outcomes of the speaker and the speech.

9. Reference

No one person knows everything all the time at any given moment, and no two people have experienced life in the same way. For this reason, use references carefully. Reference involves attention to the source and way you present your information. The audience won’t expect you to personally gather statistics and publish a study, but they will expect you to state where you got your information.

1.6 PURPOSE AND CENTRAL IDEA STATEMENTS

Speeches have traditionally been seen to have one of three broad purposes: to inform, to persuade, and — well, to be honest, different words are used for the third kind of speech purpose: to inspire, to amuse, to please, or to entertain. These broad goals are commonly known as a speech’s general purpose, since, in gen- eral, you are trying to inform, persuade, or entertain your audience without regard to specifically what the topic will be. Perhaps you could think of them as appealing to the understanding of the audience (informa- tive), the will or action (persuasive), and the emotion or pleasure.

Now that you know your general purpose (to inform, to persuade, or to entertain), you can start to move in the direction of the specific purpose. A specific purpose statement builds on your general purpose (to inform) and makes it more specific (as the name suggests). So if your first speech is an informative speech, your general purpose will be to inform your audience about a very specific realm of knowledge.

In writing your specific purpose statement, you will take three contributing elements (shown in figure 5.3) that will come together to help you determine your specific purpose:

- You (your interests, your background, past jobs, experience, education, major),
- Your audience
- The context or setting.

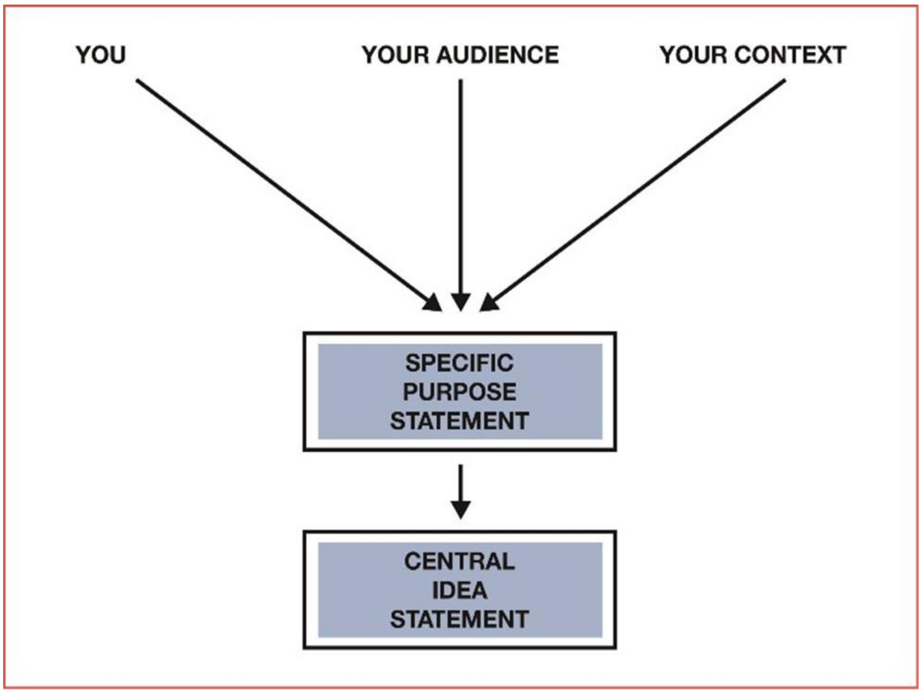


Figure 5.3. You, your audience, and your context (Tucker & Barton, 2016)

1.6.1 Putting It Together

Keeping these three inputs in mind, you can begin to write a specific purpose statement, which will be the foundation for everything you say in the speech and a guide for what you do not say. This formula will help you in putting together your specific purpose statement:

To [Specific Communication Word (inform, explain, demonstrate, describe, define, persuade, convince, prove, argue)] my [Target Audience (my classmates, the members of the Social Work Club, my coworkers]. [The Content (how to bake brownies, that Macs are better than PCs].

Example: The purpose of my presentation is to demonstrate for my co-workers the value of informed inter-cultural communication.

1.6.2 Formulating a Central Idea Statement

While you will not actually say your specific purpose statement during your speech, you will need to clearly state what your focus and main points are going to be. The statement that reveals your main points is commonly known as the central idea statement (or just the central idea). Just as you would create a thesis state- ment for an essay or research paper, the central idea statement helps focus your presentation by defining your topic, purpose, direction, angle and/or point of view. Here are two examples:

Specific Purpose – To explain to my classmates the effects of losing a pet on the elderly.

Central Idea – When elderly persons lose their animal companions, they can experience serious psychological, emotional, and physical effects.

Specific Purpose – To demonstrate to my audience the correct method for cleaning a computer keyboard.

Central Idea – Your computer keyboard needs regular cleaning to function well, and you can achieve that in four easy steps.

1.7 Research

The foundational way to offer support for the points you make in your speech is by providing evidence from other sources, which you will find by doing research.

You have access to many sources of information: books in print or electronic format, internet webpages, journal articles in databases, and information from direct, primary sources through surveys and interviews. With so many sources, information literacy is a vital skill for business professionals.

The term **"research"** is a broad one, for which the Merriam-Webster dictionary offers two basic definitions: studious inquiry or examination; especially: investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws. The more applicable meaning for this chapter is the collecting of information about a particular subject. The first definition given refers, appropriately, to primary research, which depends on primary sources. The term "primary source" means that the material is first-hand, or straight from the source, so to speak.

Primary sources: information that is first-hand or straight from the source; information that is unfiltered by interpretation or editing.

Secondary sources: information that is not directly from the source; information that has been compiled, filtered, edited, or interpreted in some way.

Journalists, historians, biologists, chemists, psychologists, sociologists, and others conduct primary research, which is part of achieving a doctorate in one's field and adding to what is called "the knowledge base."

For your presentations, you might use primary sources as well. Let's say you want to do a persuasive presentation to convince the public to wear their seatbelts. Some of the basic information you might need to do this is: how many people in the class don't wear seatbelts regularly, and why they choose not to.

You could conduct primary research and conduct a survey to determine if people in your town or city wear their seatbelts and, if not, why not. This way, you are getting information directly from a primary source. It is possible that you will access published primary sources in your research for your presentation (and you will definitely do so as you progress in your discipline). Additionally, and more commonly, you will use secondary sources, which are articles, books, and websites that are compilations or interpretations of the primary sources.

As you prepare your presentations, your employer or audience may have specific requirements for your sources. He or she might require a mix of sources in different formats. It is important that you note where you found your information in your presentation – a process called citation, or referencing.

Whenever possible, seek out original sources for the information you will use — for example, if you are using statistics about the amount of steel produced in Canada per year, you would collect that information from Statistics Canada. The next-best option is to find sources that are considered trustworthy: academic jour- nals, books, well-known newspapers and magazines, and certain organizations.

1.8 ORGANIZATIONAL MODELS FOR PRESENTATIONS

Once you've completed your research, you'll begin to collect your material into a series of main points by using an organizational model. Different models are used for different types of presentations – you'll need to refer back to your Audience-Context-Purpose, as well as your purpose statement, to determine which will best suit your presentation.

1.8.1 Chronological Pattern

Chronological always refers to time order. Since the specific purpose is about stages, it is necessary to put the four stages in the right order. It would make no sense to put the fourth stage second and the third stage first. However, chronological time can be long or short. If you are giving a presentation about the history of your company, that may cover years of decades. If your presentation is about a product development cycle, it may only a few weeks or months. The commonality is the order of the information. Chronological speeches that refer to processes are usually given to promote understanding of a process, or to promote action and instruction.

1.8.2 Spatial Pattern

Another common thought process is movement in space or direction, which is called the spatial pattern. With this pattern, the information is organized based on a place or space that the audience can imagine (or "decode") easily. A spatial-pattern presentation might cover the regional sales results for an automotive manufacturer, from the east coast to the west coast of Canada.

1.8.3 Topical Pattern/Parts-of-the-Whole Pattern

The topical organizational pattern is probably the most all-purpose pattern, used most often in informational and persuasive presentations. Many subjects will have main points that naturally divide into: "types of," "kinds of," "sorts of," or "categories of." Other subjects naturally divide into "parts of the whole." However, you will want to keep your categories simple, clear, distinct, and at five or fewer.

Another principle of organization to think about when using topical organization is "climax" organization. That means putting your strongest argument or most important point last when applicable. This model is used most often in sales presentations and proposals.

1.8.4 Cause/Effect Pattern

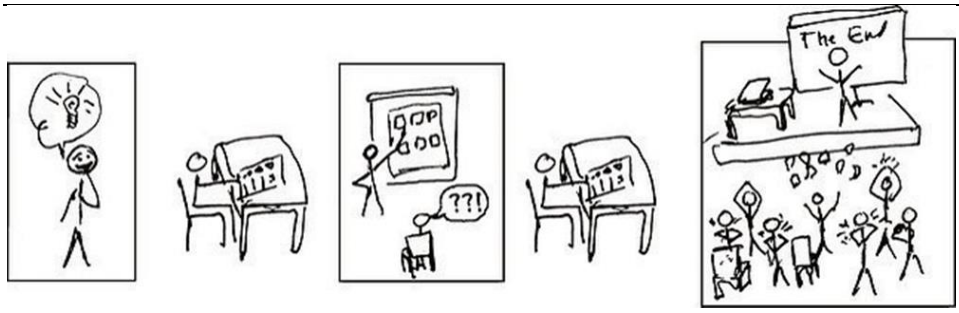
If the specific purpose mentions words such as “causes,” “origins,” “roots of,” “foundations,” “basis,” “grounds,” or “source,” it is a causal order; if it mentions words such as “effects,” “results,” “outcomes,” “consequences,” or “products,” it is effect order. If it mentions both, it would of course be cause/effect order.

1.8.5 Problem-Solution Pattern

The problem-solution pattern is most often used in persuasive presentations. The principle behind problem-solution pattern is that if you explain to an audience a problem, you should not leave them hanging without solutions. Problems are discussed for understanding and to do something about them. Additionally, when you want to persuade someone to act, the first reason is usually that something is wrong!

A variation of the problem-solution pattern, and one that sometimes requires more in-depth exploration of an issue, is the “problem-cause-solution” pattern. In many cases, you can’t really solve a problem without first identifying what caused the problem. This is similar to the organizational pattern called Monroe’s Moti- vated Sequence (German, Gronbeck, Ehninger & Monroe, 2012).

1.9 OUTLINING YOUR PRESENTATION



You’re now ready to prepare an outline for your presentation. To be successful in your presentation, you’ll need two outlines: a preparation outline, and a speaking outline.

Preparation outlines are comprehensive outlines that include all of the information in your presentation. Our presentation outline will consist of the content of what the audience will see and hear. Eventually, you will move away from this outline as you develop your materials and practice your presentation.

Your speaking outline will contain notes to guide you, and is usually not shared with your audience. It will summarize the full preparation outline down to more usable notes. You should create a set of abbreviated notes for the actual delivery.

Your organizational model will help determine how you will structure your preparation outline. However, most, if not all, of the organization models will align with this structure:

1. Attention Statement: an engaging or interesting statement that will cause your audience to sit up and take notice.
2. Introduction: setting out your general idea statement (LINK) and giving the audience an idea of what to expect.
3. Body: This section contains your research, main points and other relevant information. It will follow your organizational pattern.
4. Conclusion: reiterating your idea statement, and/or includes a call-to-action — what you want the audience to do or think about following your presentation.
5. Residual Message: this is an optional section, but a powerful one. It is the final message you want the audience to remember.

You can use your presentation outline as a starting point to developing your speaking outline. It's a good idea to make speaking notes to align with your main points and visuals in each section.

1.9.1 Using Examples and Scenarios

Presenters will often use examples and scenarios to help illustrate their message. The main difference between examples and scenarios is that while both help "show" the audience what you mean, an example is the "thing" itself, while a scenario would include more detail about the sequence or development of events. Scenarios also tend to be longer and more nuanced.

An 'example' of a sales target might be: to sell 500 units in 30 days. A 'scenario' might be described as: Company A is selling vacuums to the Atlantic Canada region. They are trying to increase their sales, and so have set a target of 500 units in the region in 30 days, using a sales incentive program for employees and promoting a sale at local stores.

1.9.2 A Word About Storytelling

Storytelling can be an effective way to convey your message to your audience. Stories are a fundamental part of the human experience, and, if well-told, can resonate with listeners. Some of the most inspiring TEDTalks speakers use storytelling effectively in their presentations. You can find out more about how to incorporate storytelling techniques into presentations from the TEDTAlk speakers directly.

1.10 TRANSITION

By now you have identified your main points, chosen your organizational pattern, have written your outline, and are ready to begin putting your presentation together. But how will you connect your main points together in a relevant manner, so that your presentation appears fluid?

Transitions are words, phrases, or visual devices that help the audience follow the speaker’s ideas, connect the main points to each other, and see the relationships you’ve created in the information you are present- ing. Transitions are used by the speaker to guide the audience in the progression from one significant idea, concept or point to the next issue. They can also show the relationship between the main point and the sup- port the speaker uses to illustrate, provide examples for, or reference outside sources. Depending your purpose, transitions can serve different roles as you help create the glue that will connect your points together in a way the audience can easily follow.

Internal summaries: a type of connective transition that emphasizes what has come before and remind the audience of what has been covered. Examples include; as I have said, as we have seen, as mentioned earlier, in any event, in other words, in short, on the whole, therefore, to summarize, as a result, as I’ve noted previously, in conclusion.

Internal previews: a type of connective that emphasizes what is coming up next in the speech and what to expect with regard to the content. “If we look ahead to, next we’ll examine, now we can focus our attention on, first we’ll look at, then we’ll examine…” etc.

Signposts: a type of connective transition that emphasizes physical movement through the speech content and lets the audience know exactly where they are: stop and consider, we can now address, next I'd like to explain, turning from/to, another, this reminds me of, I would like to emphasize.

Time: focuses on the chronological aspects of your speech order. Particularly useful in a speech utilizing a story, this transition can illustrate for the audience progression of time. Before, earlier, immediately, in the meantime, in the past, lately, later, meanwhile, now, presently, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon as long as, as soon as, at last, at length, at that time, then, until, afterward.

Compare/Contrast: draws a parallel or distinction between two ideas, concepts, or examples. It can indicate a common or divergent area between points for the audience. In the same way, by the same token, equally, similarly, just as we have seen, in the same vein.

Cause and Effect or Result: illustrates a relationship between two ideas, concepts, or examples and may focus on the outcome or result. It can illustrate a relationship between points for the audience. As a result, because, consequently, for this purpose, accordingly, so, then, therefore, thereupon, thus, to this end, for this reason, as a result, because, therefore, consequently, as a consequence, and the outcome was…

Examples: illustrates a connection between a point and an example or examples. You may find visual aids work well with this type of transition. In fact, as we can see, after all, even, for example, for instance, of course, specifically, such as, in the following example, to illustrate my point.

Place: refers to a location, often in a spatially organized speech, of one point of emphasis to another. Again, visual aids work well when discussing physical location with an audience. Opposite to, there, to the left, to the right, above, below, adjacent to, elsewhere, far, farther on, beyond, closer to, here, near, nearby, next to…

Clarification: A clarification transition restates or further develops a main idea or point. It can also serve as a signal to a key point. To clarify, that is, I mean, in other words, to put it another way, that is to say, to rephrase it, in order to explain, this means…

Concession: indicates knowledge of contrary information. It can address a perception the audience may hold and allow for clarification. We can see that while, although it is true that, granted that, while it may appear that, naturally, of course, I can see that, I admit that even though…

1.11 LET US SUM UP

1.12 FURTHER READING

- The commercial site from Inc. magazine presents an article on organizing your speech by Patricia Fripp, for- mer president of the National Speakers Association. http://www.inc.com/articles/2000/10/20844.html
- Read a straightforward tutorial on speech organization by Robert Gwynne on this University of Central Florida site. http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~rbrokaw/organizing.html
- View an eHow video on how to organize a speech. How does the advice in this video differ from organizing advice given in this chapter? http://www.ehow.com/video_4401082_organizing-speech-parts.html
- Read more about how to outline a speech on this site from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. http://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/research/outlining.html
- Learn more about how to outline a speech from the Six Minutes public speaking and presentation skills blog. http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/2008/02/29/speech-preparation-3-outline-examples

1.13 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Label and discuss the three main components of the rhetorical situation.
2. Identify and provide examples of at least five of the nine basic cognate strategies in communication.
3. Demonstrate how to build a sample presentation by expanding on the main points you wish to convey.
4. Demonstrate how to use structural parts of any presentation.
5. Identify how to use different organizing principles for a presentation.

Unit 2: DEVELOPING PRESENTATION

2

Unit Structure

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to understand

- The Importance of Delivery
- Methods of Speech Delivery
- Preparing For Your Delivery
- Practicing Your Delivery
- What to do When Delivering Your Speech

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Many surveys have shown that public speaking is at the top of the list of fears for most people — sometimes, more high on the list than death. No one is afraid of writing their speech or conducting the research: people generally only fear the delivery aspect of the speech, which, compared to the amount of time you will put into writing the speech (days, hopefully), will be the shortest part of the speech giving process (5-8 minutes, generally, for classroom speeches). The irony, of course, is that delivery, being the thing people fear the most, is simultaneously the aspect of public speaking that will require the least amount of time.

2.3 METHODS OF PRESENTATION DELIVERY

2.3.1 The Importance of Delivery

Delivery is what you are probably most concerned about when it comes to giving presentations. This chapter is designed to help you give the best delivery possible and eliminate some of the nervousness you might be feeling. To do that, you should first dismiss the myth that public speaking is just reading and talking at the same time. Speaking in public has more formality than talking. During a speech, you should present yourself professionally. This doesn’t necessarily mean you must wear a suit or “dress up”, but it does mean making yourself presentable by being well groomed and wearing clean, appropriate clothes. It also means being prepared to use language correctly and appropriately for the audience and the topic, to make eye contact with your audience, and to look like you know your topic very well.

While speaking has more formality than talking, it has less formality than reading. Speaking allows for flexibility, meaningful pauses, eye contact, small changes in word order, and vocal emphasis. Reading is a more or less exact replication of words on paper without the use of any non-verbal interpretation. Speaking, as you will realize if you think about excellent speakers you have seen and heard, provides a more animated message.

2.3.2 Methods of Presentation Delivery

There are four methods of delivery that can help you balance between too much and too little formality when giving a presentation.

1. Impromptu Speaking

Impromptu speaking is the presentation of a short message without advance preparation. You have probably done impromptu speaking many times in informal, conversational settings. Self-introductions in group set- tings are examples of impromptu speaking: “Hi, my name is Steve, and I’m an account manager.” Another example of impromptu presenting occurs when you answer a question such as, “What did you think of the report?” Your response has not been pre-planned, and you are constructing your arguments and points as you speak. Even worse, you might find yourself going into a meeting and your boss says, “I want you to talk about the last stage of the project. . . “and you had no warning.

The advantage of this kind of speaking is that it’s spontaneous and responsive in an animated group context. The disadvantage is that the speaker is given little or no time to contemplate the central theme of his or her message. As a result, the message may be disorganized and difficult for listeners to follow.

Here is a step-by-step guide that may be useful if you are called upon to give an impromptu presentation in public:

- Take a moment to collect your thoughts and plan the main point you want to make.
- Thank the person for inviting you to speak. Avoid making comments about being unprepared, called upon at the last moment, on the spot, or feeling uneasy.

- Deliver your message, making your main point as briefly as you can while still covering it adequately and at a pace your listeners can follow.
- If you can use a structure, using numbers if possible: “Two main reasons . . .” or “Three parts of our plan...” or “Two side effects of this drug. . .” Timeline structures are also effective, such as “past, present, and future or East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast”.
- Thank the person again for the opportunity to speak.
- Stop talking (it is easy to “ramble on” when you don’t have something prepared). If in front of an audience, don’t keep talking as you move back to your seat.

Impromptu presentations: the presentation of a short message without advance preparation. Impromptu presentations are generally most successful when they are brief and focus on a single point.

2. Manuscript Presentations

Manuscript presentations are the word-for-word iteration of a written message. In a manuscript presentation, the speaker maintains their attention on the printed page except when using visual aids. The advantage of reading from a manuscript is the exact repetition of original words. In some circumstances this can be extremely important. For example, reading a statement about your organization’s legal responsibilities to customers may require that the original words be exact.

A manuscript presentation may be appropriate at a more formal affair (like a report to shareholders), when your presentation must be said exactly as written in order to convey the proper emotion or decorum the situation deserves.

However, there are costs involved in manuscript presentations. First, it’s typically an uninteresting way to present. Unless the presenter has rehearsed the reading as a complete performance animated with vocal expression and gestures, the presentation tends to be dull. Keeping one’s eyes glued to the script prevents eye contact with the audience. For this kind of “straight” manuscript presentation to hold audience attention, the audience must be already interested in the message and presenter before the delivery begins.

3. Extemporaneous Presentations

Extemporaneous presentations are carefully planned and rehearsed presentations, delivered in a conversational manner using brief notes. By using notes rather than a full manuscript, the extemporaneous presenter can establish and maintain eye contact with the audience and assess how well they are understanding the presentation as it progresses. Without all the words on the page to read, you have little choice but to look up and make eye contact with your audience.

Presenting extemporaneously has some advantages. It promotes the likelihood that you, the speaker, will be perceived as knowledgeable and credible since you know the speech well enough that you don't need to read it. In addition, your audience is likely to pay better attention to the message because it is engaging both verbally and nonverbally. It also allows flexibility; you are working from the strong foundation of an outline, but if you need to delete, add, or rephrase something at the last minute or to adapt to your audience, you can do so.

The disadvantage of extemporaneous presentations is that it in some cases it does not allow for the verbal and the nonverbal preparation that are almost always required for a good speech.

Adequate preparation cannot be achieved the day before you're scheduled to present, so be aware that if you want to present a credibly delivered speech, you will need to practice many times. Because extemporaneous presenting is the style used in the great majority of business presentation situations, most of the information in the subsequent sections of this chapter is targeted toward this kind of speaking.

4. Memorized Speaking

Memorized speaking is the recitation of a written message that the speaker has committed to memory. Actors, of course, recite from memory whenever they perform from a script in a stage play, television pro- gram, or movie scene. When it comes to speeches, memorization can be useful when the message needs to be exact and the speaker doesn't want to be confined by notes.

The advantage to memorization is that it enables the speaker to maintain eye contact with the audience throughout the speech. Being free of notes means that you can move freely around the stage and use your hands to make gestures. If your speech uses visual aids, this freedom is even more of an advantage. How- ever, there are some real and potential costs.

First, unless you also plan and memorize every vocal cue (the subtle but meaningful variations in speech delivery, which can include the use of pitch, tone, volume, and pace), gesture, and facial expression, your presentation will be flat and uninteresting, and even the most fascinating topic will suffer. Second, if you lose your place and start trying to ad lib, the contrast in your style of delivery will alert your audience that something is wrong. More frighteningly, if you go completely blank during the presentation, it will be extremely difficult to find your place and keep going. Obviously, memorizing a typical seven-minute presentation takes a great deal of time and effort, and if you aren't used to memorizing, it is very difficult to pull off. Realistically, you probably will not have the time necessary to give a completely memorized speech.

However, if you practice adequately, your approach will still feel like you are being extemporaneous.

2.4 PREPARING FOR YOUR DELIVERY

Your audiences, circumstances, and physical contexts for presenting will vary, but will arise regularly in any business environment. Being prepared to deal with different presenting situations will help reduce anxiety you may have about giving a speech, so let's look at some common factors you need to keep in mind as you prepare for a typical business presentation.

Using Lecterns: Lecterns add formality to the presentation situation, but it can be tempting to hide behind it. Use it to hold your notes only. This will enhance your eye contact as well as free up your hands for gesturing, and give the appearance of confidence.

Large spaces: auditoriums or other large spaces can be intimidating. Preparation and practice will prevent poor performance; a rehearsal, if available, can also ease nerves. Slowing your speech to allow for echo, and adjust visual aids so they can be seen by those in the back of the hall.

Small spaces: these are usually easier to manage for presenters, but use note cards and visual aids carefully, as your audience will be able to see everything. Ideally, arrive early to set up your presentation material to prevent fumbling and delays.

Outdoors: Noise (cars, wind), insects, weather, sunshine and other environmental factors may be hard to control. Do your best to project your voice without yelling, and choose locations that are quiet and sheltered, if possible.

Using a Microphone: you can avoid difficulties with microphones by doing a rehearsal or test ahead of time. Ensure you enunciate clearly and give a few inches between your face and the microphone.

Small Audience Size: A small audience will allow for greater contact, but may invite interruptions. Deal with any questions politely and say you'll try to answer that question at the end of the presentation. Or, set the agenda at the beginning so that the audience knows there will be a question-and-answer period at the end.

2.5 PRACTISING YOUR DELIVERY

There is no fool-proof recipe for good delivery. You are a unique person, and you embody different experiences and interests from others. This means you have an approach, or a style, that is effective for you. It also means that your concern about what others think of you can cause anxiety, even during the most carefully researched and interesting presentation. But there are some techniques you can use to minimize that anxious feeling and put yourself in the best possible position to succeed on presentation day. You need to pre- pare for your presentation in as realistic a simulation as possible. What follows are some general tips you should keep in mind, but they all essentially derive from one very straight-forward premise: Practice your presentation beforehand, at home or elsewhere, the way you will give it in person.

2.5.1 Practice Your Presentation Out Loud

Practice allows you to learn what to say, when and how to say it, but it also lets you know where potential problems lie. Since you will be speaking with a normal volume for your presentation, you need to practice that way, even at home. This help you learn the presentation, but it will help identify any places where you tend to mispronounce words. Also, sentences on paper do not always translate well to the spoken medium. Practicing out loud allows you to actually hear where you have trouble and fix it before getting up in front of the audience.

2.5.2 Practice Your Presentation Standing Up

Since you will be standing for your presentation (in all likelihood), you need to practice that way. As we men- tion in more detail below, the default position for delivering a presentation is with your feet shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Practising this way will help develop muscle memory and will make it feel more natural when you are doing it for real.

2.5.3 Practice Your Presentation with an Audience

The best way to prepare for the feeling of having someone watch you while giving a presentation is to have someone watch you while you practice. Ask your colleagues, friends, family, or significant other to listen to you while running through what you will say. Not only will you get practice in front of an audience, but they may be able to tell you about any parts that were unclear or problems you might encounter when delivering it on the day. During practice, it may help to pick out some strategically placed objects around the room to occasionally glance at just to get into the habit of looking around more often and making eye contact with multiple people in your audience.

2.5.4 Practice Your Presentation for Time

You'll likely have a time limit for presentation. As a rule of thumb, plan to have a 60-second "buffer" at the end of your presentation, in case something goes wrong. For example, if your presentation is set for 10 minutes, plan for nine minutes. Should you rush through or end early, make sure you can add more detail to the end of your presentation if needed. With all of this in mind, practising at least three times at home will ensure your presentation is properly timed.

2.5.5 Practice Your Presentation by Filming Yourself

There is nothing that gets you to change what you're doing or correct a problem quicker than seeing your- self doing something you don't like on video. By watching yourself, you will notice all the small things you do that might prove to be distracting during the actual presentation.

It is important enough that it deserves reiterating: Practice your speech beforehand, at home or elsewhere, the way you will give it on the scheduled day.

2.6 WHAT TO DO WHEN DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH

The interplay between the verbal and nonverbal components of your speech can either bring the message vividly to life or confuse or bore the audience. Therefore, it is best that you neither over-dramatize your speech delivery behaviors nor downplay them. This is a balance achieved through rehearsal, trial and error, and experience. One way to think of this is in terms of the Goldilocks paradigm: you don't want to overdo the delivery because you might distract your audience by looking hyper or overly animated. Conversely, someone whose delivery is too understated (meaning they don't move their hands or feet at all) looks unnatural and uncomfortable, which can also distract. Just like Goldilocks, you want a delivery that is "just right". This middle ground between too much and too little is a much more natural approach to public speaking delivery, which will be covered in more detail in the following sections where we discuss aspects of your delivery and what you need to think about while actually giving your speech.

Hands: Use your hands as naturally as you would in normal conversation. Try to pay attention to what you do with your hands in regular conversations and incorporate that into your delivery. If you're not comfortable with that, rest them on the lectern or fold them in front of your body.

Feet: stand shoulder-width apart, keeping your knees slightly bent. If you are comfortable, try walking around a bit if space allows and it appears natural in practice. Avoid shifting from foot-to-foot, or bouncing nervously.

Objects: bring only what you need to give your presentation. Anything else will be a distraction. Turn off any personal devices (cell phones, tablets) so there are no interruptions.

Clothing: dress professionally, based on the culture of your organization. Avoid jewellery that could make noise, uncomfortable shoes or any item that hangs from you. Tie back long hair so you are not tempted to touch or move it.

Eye Contact: Eye contact is an extremely important element of your delivery. The general rule of thumb is to aim for 80% of your total speech time be spent making eye contact with your audience (Lucas, 2015, p. 250).

Volume: The volume you use should fit the size of the audience and the room.

Rate: How quickly or slowly you say the words of your speech are the rate. You especially will want to maintain a good, deliberate rate at the beginning of your speech because your audience will be getting used to your voice.

Vocalized Pauses: Everyone uses vocalized pauses to some degree, but not everyone's are problematic. This obviously becomes an issue when the vocalized pauses become distracting due to their overuse. Identify your own common vocalized pauses and try to catch yourself to begin the process of reducing your dependence on them.

The items listed above represent the major delivery issues you will want to be aware of when giving a speech, but it is by no means an exhaustive list.

There is however, one final piece of delivery advice. No matter how hard you practice and how diligent you are in preparing for your presentation, you are most likely going to mess up some aspect at some point.

That's normal. Everyone does it. The key is to not make a big deal about it or let the audience know you messed up. Odds are that they will never even realize your mistake if you don't tell them there was a mistake.

2.7 LET US SUM UP

Good delivery is meant to augment your presentation and help convey your information to the audience. Anything that potentially distracts your audience means that fewer people will be informed, persuaded, or entertained by what you have said. Practicing your presentation in an environment that closely resembles the actual situation that you will be speaking in will better prepare you for what to do and how to deliver your speech when it really counts.

2.8 FURTHER READING

- Duarte, N. (2011). The secret structure of great talks [Video]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/ talks/nancy_duarte_the_secret_structure_of_great_talks[i]

2.9 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Identify the different methods of speech delivery.
2. Identify key elements in preparing to deliver a speech.
3. Understand the benefits of delivery-related behaviors.
4. Utilize specific techniques to enhance speech delivery.

Unit 3: PRESENTATION TO INFORM

3

Unit Structure

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit student will be able to understand:

- Functions of the Presentation to Inform
- Types of Presentations to Inform
- Adapting Your Presentation to Teach
- Preparing to Perform
- Creating an Informative Presentation

3.2 INTRODUCTION

At some point in your business career you will be called upon to teach someone something. It may be a customer, co-worker, or supervisor, and in each case you are performing an informative speech. It is distinct from a sales speech, or persuasive speech, in that your goal is to communicate the information so that your listener understands. The informative speech is one performance you'll give many times across your career, whether your audience is one person, a small group, or a large auditorium full of listeners. Once you master the art of the informative speech, you may mix and match it with other styles and techniques.

3.3 FUNCTIONS OF THE PRESENTATION TO INFORM

Informative presentations focus on helping the audience to understand a topic, issue, or technique more clearly. There are distinct functions inherent in a speech to inform, and you may choose to use one or more of these functions in your speech. Let's take a look at the functions and see how they relate to the central objective of facilitating audience understanding.

Share

The basic definition of communication highlights the process of understanding and sharing meaning. An informative speech follows this definition when a speaker shares content and information with an audience. As part of a speech, you wouldn't typically be asking the audience to respond or solve a problem. Instead you'd be offering to share with the audience some of the information you have gathered related to a topic.

Increase Understanding

How well does your audience grasp the information? This should be a guiding question to you on two levels. The first involves what they already know—or don't know—about your topic, and what key terms or ideas might be necessary for someone completely unfamiliar with your topic to grasp the ideas you are presenting. The second involves your presentation and the illustration of ideas. The audience will respond to your attention statement and hopefully maintain interest, but how will you take your speech beyond superficial coverage of content and effectively communicate key relationships that increase understanding? These questions should serve as a challenge for your informative speech, and by looking at your speech from an audience-oriented perspective, you will increase your ability to increase the audience's understanding.

Change Perceptions

How you perceive something has everything to do with a range of factors that are unique to you. We all want to make sense of our world, share our experiences, and learn that many people face the same challenges we do. For instance, many people perceive the process of speaking in public as a significant challenge, and in this text, we have broken down the process into several manageable steps. In so doing, we have to some degree changed your perception of public speaking.

When you present your speech to inform, you may want to change the audience member's perceptions of your topic. You may present an informative speech on air pollution and want to change common perceptions such as the idea that most of North America's air pollution comes from private cars. You won't be asking people to go out and vote, or change their choice of automobiles, but you will help your audience change their perceptions of your topic.

Gain Skills

Just as you want to increase the audience's understanding, you may want to help the audience members gain skills. If you are presenting a speech on how to make a meal from fresh ingredients, your audience may thank you for not only the knowledge of the key ingredients and their preparation but also the product available at the conclusion. If your audience members have never made their own meal, they may gain a new skill from your speech.

Exposition versus Interpretation

When you share information informally, you often provide your own perspective and attitude for your own reasons. The speech to inform the audience on a topic, idea, or area of content is not intended to be a dis- play of attitude and opinion.

The speech to inform is like the classroom setting in that the goal is to inform, not to persuade, entertain, display attitude, or create comedy. If you have analyzed your audience, you'll be better prepared to develop appropriate ways to gain their attention and inform them on your topic. You want to communicate thoughts, ideas, and relationships and allow each listener specifically, and the audience generally, to draw their own conclusions. The speech to inform is all about sharing information to meet the audience's needs, not your own.

Exposition

This relationship between informing as opposed to persuading your audience is often expressed in terms of exposition versus interpretation.

Exposition means a public exhibition or display, often expressing a complex topic in a way that makes the relationships and content clear. The goal is to communicate the topic and content to your audience in ways that illustrate, explain, and reinforce the overall content to make your topic more accessible to the audience. The audience wants to learn about your topic and may have some knowledge on it as you do. It is your responsibility to consider ways to display the information effectively.

Interpretation and Bias

Interpretation involves adapting the information to communicate a message, perspective, or agenda. Your insights and attitudes will guide your selection of material, what you focus on, and what you delete (choosing what not to present to the audience). Your interpretation will involve personal bias.

Bias is an unreasoned or not-well-thought-out judgment. Bias involves beliefs or ideas held on the basis of conviction rather than current evidence. Beliefs are often called "habits of the mind" because we come to rely on them to make decisions. Which is the better, cheapest, most expensive, or the middle-priced prod- uct? People often choose the middle-priced product and use the belief "if it costs more it must be better” (and the opposite: “if it is cheap it must not be very good”). The middle-priced item, regardless of actual price, is often perceived as “good enough.” All these perceptions are based on beliefs, and they may not apply to the given decision or even be based on any evidence or rational thinking.

We take mental shortcuts all day long, but in our speech to inform, we have to be careful not to reinforce bias.

Point of View

Clearly no one can be completely objective and remove themselves from their own perceptual process. People express themselves and naturally relate what is happening now to what has happened to them in the past. You are your own artist, but you also control your creations.

Objectivity involves expressions and perceptions of facts that are free from distortion by your prejudices, bias, feelings or interpretations. For example, is the post office box blue? An objective response would be yes or no, but a subjective response might sound like “Well, it’s not really blue as much as it is navy, even a bit of purple.” Subjectivity involves expressions or perceptions that are modified, altered, or impacted by your personal bias, experiences, and background. In an informative speech, your audience will expect you to present the information in a relatively objective form. The speech should meet the audience’s need as they learn about the content, not your feelings, attitudes, or commentary on the content.

Here are five suggestions to help you present a neutral speech:

Keep your language neutral.

Keep your sources credible and not from biased organizations.

Keep your presentation balanced. If you use a source that supports one clear side of an issue, include an alternative source and view. Give each equal time and respectful consideration.

Keep your audience in mind. Not everyone will agree with every point or source of evidence, but diversity in your speech will have more to offer everyone.

Keep who you represent in mind: Your business and yourself.

3.4 Types of Presentations to Inform

Speaking to inform may fall into one of several categories. The presentation to inform may be

- an explanation,
- a report,
- a description,
- a demonstration of how to do something.

In the sections below each of these types of informative speech will be described.

Explanation

Have you ever listened to a lecture or speech where you just didn't get it? It wasn't that you weren't interested, at least not at first. Perhaps the presenter used language you didn't understand or gave a confusing example. Soon you probably lost interest and sat there, attending the speech in body but certainly not in mind. An effective speech to inform will take a complex topic or issue and explain it to the audience in ways that increase audience understanding.

No one likes to feel left out. As the speaker, it's your responsibility to ensure that this doesn't happen. Also know that to teach someone something new—perhaps a skill that they did not posses or a perspective that allows them to see new connections—is a real gift, both to you and the audience members. You will feel rewarded because you made a difference and they will perceive the gain in their own understanding.

Report

As a business communicator, you may be called upon to give an informative report where you communicate status, trends, or relationships that pertain to a specific topic. The informative report is a speech where you organize your information around key events, discoveries, or technical data and provide context and illustration for your audience. They may naturally wonder, “Why sales are up (or down)?” or “What is the product leader in your line up?” and you need to anticipate their perspective and present the key information that relates to your topic.

Description

Have you ever listened to a friend tell you about their recent trip somewhere and found the details fascinating, making you want to travel there or visit a similar place? Describing information requires emphasis on language that is vivid, captures attention, and excites the imagination. Your audience will be drawn to your effective use of color, descriptive language, and visual aids. An informative speech that focuses description will be visual in many ways. Use your imagination to place yourself in their perspective: how would you like to have someone describe the topic to you?

Demonstration

You want to teach the audience how to program the applications on a new smartphone. A demonstrative speech focuses on clearly showing a process and telling the audience important details about each step so that they can imitate, repeat, or do the action themselves. Consider the visual aids or supplies you will need.

By considering each step and focusing on how to simplify it, you can understand how the audience might grasp the new information and how you can best help them. Also, consider the desired outcome; for exam- ple, will your listeners be able to actually do the task themselves? Regardless of the sequence or pattern you will illustrate or demonstrate, consider how people from your anticipated audience will respond, and budget additional time for repetition and clarification.

Informative presentations come in all sizes, shapes, and forms. The main goal in an informative presentation

is to inform, not to persuade, and that requires an emphasis on credibility, for the speaker and the data or information presented.
Here are additional, more specific types of informative presentations:

- Biographical information
- Case study results
- Comparative advantage results
- Cost-benefit analysis results
- Feasibility studies
- Field study results
- Financial trends analysis
- Health, safety, and accident rates
- Instruction guidelines
- Laboratory results
- Product or service orientations
- Progress reports
- Research results
- Technical specifications

Depending on the situation, the audience, and the specific information to be presented, any of these types of presentation may be given as an explanation, a report, a description, or a demonstration.

3.5 Adapting Your Presentation to Teach

Successfully delivering an informative speech requires adopting an audience centered perspective. Imagine that you are in the audience. What would it take for the speaker to capture and maintain your attention?
What would encourage you to listen? In this section we present several techniques for achieving this, including motivating your audience to listen, framing your information in meaningful ways, and designing your presentation to appeal to diverse learning styles.

Motivating the Listener

In an ideal world, every audience member would be interested in your topic. Unfortunately, however, not everyone will be equally interested in your informative speech. So what is a speaker to do in order to motivate the listener?

The perception process involves selection or choice, and you want your audience to choose to listen to you. Begin with your attention statement at the beginning of your speech and make sure it is dynamic and arresting. Remember what active listening involves, and look for opportunities throughout your speech to encourage active listening.

Review and consider using the seven strategies below by posing questions that audience members may think, but not actually say out loud, when deciding whether to listen to your speech. By considering each question, you will take a more audience-centered approach to developing your speech, increasing your effectiveness.

"appX Cambridge 2012 Participants" by bobfamiliar shared under a CC BY license

1. How Is Your Topic Relevant to Me?

A natural question audience members will ask themselves is, what does the topic have to do with me? Why should I care about it? Relevance means that the information applies, relates, or has significance to the lis- tener. Find areas of common ground and build on them in your presentation.

2. What Will I Learn from You?

This question involves several issues. How much does the audience already know about your subject? What areas do you think they might not know? By building on the information the audience knows, briefly review- ing it and then extending it, illustrating it, and demonstrating the impact, you inform them of things they didn't already know.

3. Why Are You Interested in This Topic?

Your interest in your topic is an excellent way to encourage your audience to listen. You probably selected your topic with your audience in mind, but also considered your interest in the topic. Why did you choose it over other topics? What about your topic aroused your attention? Did it stimulate your curiosity? Did it make you excited about researching and preparing a speech on it? These questions will help you clarify your interest, and by sharing the answers with your listeners, you will stimulate excitement on their part.

4. How Can I Use the Knowledge or Skills You Present to Me?

In an informative speech you are not asking your listeners to go out and vote, or to quit smoking tomorrow, as you would in a persuasive speech. Nevertheless, you need to consider how they will apply their new understanding. Application involves the individual's capacity for practical use of the information, skill, or knowledge. As a result of your speech, will your listeners be able to do something new or understand a topic better?

5. What Is New about What You Propose to Present?

People are naturally attracted to something new, unusual or unfamiliar–but we also like predictability. As a speaker, how do you meet the two contrasting needs for familiarity and something new?

Address both. You may want to start by forming a clear foundation on what you have in common with the audience. Present the known elements of your topic and then extend into areas where less is known, increasing the new information as you progress. People will feel comfortable with the familiar, and be intrigued by the unfamiliar.

6. Are You Going to Bore Me?

You have probably sat through your fair share of boring lectures where the speaker, teacher, or professor talks at length in a relatively monotone voice, fails to alternate his or her pace, incorporates few visual aids or just reads from a PowerPoint show for an hour in a dimly lighted room. Recall how you felt. Trapped?

Tired? Did you wonder why you had to be there? Then you know what you need to avoid.

Being bored means the speaker failed to stimulate you as the listener, probably increased your resistance to listening or participating, and became tiresome. To avoid boring your audience, speak with enthusiasm, and consider ways to gain, and keep gaining, their attention. You don't have to be a stand-up comedian, however, to avoid being a boring speaker.

Consider the question, "What's in it for me?" from the audience's perspective and plan to answer it specifically with vivid examples. If your presentation meets their expectations and meets their needs, listeners are more likely to give you their attention.

You may also give some thought and consideration to the organizational principle and choose a strategy that promises success. By organizing the information in interesting ways within the time frame, you can increase your effectiveness.

7. Is This Topic Really as Important as You Say It Is?

No one wants to feel like his or her time is being wasted. What is important to you and what is important to your audience may be two different things. Take time and plan to reinforce in your speech how the topic is important to your audience. Importance involves perceptions of worth, value, and usefulness.

Framing

The presentation of information shapes attitudes and behavior. This is done through framing and content. Framing involves placing an imaginary set of boundaries, much like a frame around a picture or a window, around a story, of what is included and omitted, influencing the story itself. What lies within the frame that we can see? What lies outside the frame that we cannot see?

Setting the agenda, just like the agenda of a meeting, means selecting what the audience will see and hear and in what order. In giving a speech, you select the information and set the agenda. You may choose to inform the audience on a topic that gets little press coverage, or use a popular story widely covered in a new way, with a case example and local statistics.

Another aspect of framing your message is culture. Themes of independence, overcoming challenging circumstances, and hard-fought victories may represent aspects of certain cultures in the world. If appropriate for your topic, consider localizing your presentation to incorporate cultural values in the region or nation of your audience.

Additional Tips for Success

Andrews, Andrews, and Williams (1999) offer eight ways to help listeners learn. These are adapted and augmented here.

1. **Limit the Number of Details**

While it may be tempting to include many of the facts you've found in your research, choose only those that clearly inform your audience. You don't want the audience focusing on a long list of facts and details only to miss your main points.

2. **Focus on Clear Main Points**

Your audience should be able to discern your main points clearly the first time. You'll outline them in your introduction and they will listen for them as you proceed. Connect supporting information to your clear main points to reinforce them, and provide verbal cues of points covered and points to come.

3. **Pace Yourself**

Talking too fast is a common expression of speech anxiety. One way to reduce your anxiety level is to practice and know your information well. When you deliver your speech, knowing you have time, are well prepared, and are familiar with your speech patterns will help you to pace yourself more effectively.

4. **Speak with Concern for Clarity**

Not everyone speaks English as their first language, and even among English speakers, there is a wide discrepancy in speaking style and language use. When you choose your language, consider challenging terms define them accordingly. As your rate of speech picks up, you may tend to slur words together and drop or de-emphasize consonants, especially at the ends of words. Doing this will make your speech harder to understand and will discourage listening.

5. **Use Restatement and Repetition**

There is nothing wrong with restating main points or repeating key phrases.

6. **Provide Visual Reinforcement**

As a speaker giving a prepared presentation, you have the luxury of preparing your visual aids with your audience in mind. Take advantage of the known time frame before your speech to prepare effective visual aids and your speech will be more effective.

7. Include Time for Questions

You can't possibly cover all the information about a topic that every audience member would want to know in the normal five to seven minutes of a speech. In some situations, the speaker will accept and answer questions during the body of the presentations, but it is more typical to ask listeners to hold their questions until the end.

8. Look for Ways to Involve Listeners Actively

Instead of letting your audience sit passively, motivate them to get involved in your presentation. You might ask for a show of hands as you raise a question like, "How many of you have wondered about…?" You might point out the window, encouraging your audience to notice a weather pattern or an example of air pollution. Even stepping away from the podium for a moment can provide variety and increase active listening.

To present a successful informative speech, motivate your audience by making your material relevant and useful, finding interesting ways to frame your topic, and emphasizing new aspects if the topic is a familiar one.

Preparing Your Speech to Inform

Now that you've reviewed issues central to the success of your informative speech, there's no doubt you want to get down to work. Here are five final suggestions to help you succeed.

1. Start with What You Know

Regardless of where you draw the inspiration, it's a good strategy to start with what you know and work from there. You'll be more enthusiastic, helping your audience to listen intently, and you'll save yourself time.

2. Consider Your Audience's Prior Knowledge

The audience will want to learn something from you, not hear everything they have heard before. Think about age, gender, and socioeconomic status, as well as your listeners' culture or language.

In the same way, when you prepare a speech in a business situation, do your homework. Access the com- pany website, visit the location and get to know people, and even call members of the company to discuss your topic. The more information you can gather about your audience, the better you will be able to adapt and present an effective speech.

3. Adapting Language and Technical Terms

Define and describe the key terms for your audience as part of your speech and substitute common terms where appropriate. Your audience will enjoy learning more about the topic and appreciate your consideration as you present your speech.

4. Using Outside Information

Even if you think you know everything there is to know about your topic, using outside sources will con- tribute depth to your speech, provide support for your main points, and even enhance your credibility as a speaker. There is nothing wrong with using outside information as long as you clearly cite your sources and do not present someone else's information as your own.

5. Presenting Information Ethically

Figure 7.1. Presenting information ethically.

A central but often unspoken expectation of the speaker is that we will be ethical. This means, fundamentally, that we perceive one another as human beings with common interests and needs, and that we attend to the needs of others as well as our own. An ethical informative speaker expresses respect for listeners by avoiding prejudiced comments against any group, and by being honest about the information presented, including information that may contradict the speaker's personal biases. The ethical speaker also admits it when they do not know something. The best salesperson recognizes that ethical communication is the key to success, as it builds a healthy relationship where the customer's needs are met, thereby meeting the salesperson's own needs. When presenting information ethically, you must consider the following:

Reciprocity

Reciprocity, or a relationship of mutual exchange and interdependence, is an important characteristic of a relationship, particularly between a speaker and the audience. You as the speaker will have certain expectations and roles, but dominating your audience will not encourage them to fulfill their roles in terms of participation and active listening. Communication involves give and take, and in a public speaking setting, where the communication may be perceived as "all to one," don't forget that the audience is also communicating in terms of feedback with you. You have a responsibility to attend to that feedback, and develop reciprocity with your audience. Without them, you don't have a speech.

Mutuality

Mutuality means that you search for common ground and understanding with the audience, establishing this space and building on it throughout the speech. This involves examining viewpoints other than your own, and taking steps to insure the speech integrates an inclusive, accessible format, rather than an ethno- centric one.

Nonjudgmentalism

Non-judgmentalism underlines the need to be open-minded, an expression of one's willingness to examine diverse perspectives. Your audience expects you to state the truth as you perceive it, with supporting and clarifying information to support your position, and to speak honestly. They also expect you to be open to their point of view and be able to negotiate meaning and understanding in a constructive way. Nonjudgmentalism may include taking the perspective that being different is not inherently bad and that there is common ground to be found with each other.

Honesty

Honesty, or truthfulness, directly relates to trust, a cornerstone in the foundation of a relationship with your audience. Without it, the building (the relationship) would fall down. Without trust, a relationship will not open and develop the possibility of mutual understanding. You want to share information and the audience hopefully wants to learn from you. If you only choose the best information to support only your point and ignore contrary or related issues, you may turn your informative speech into a persuasive one with bias as a central feature.

Respect

Respect should be present throughout a speech, demonstrating the speaker's high esteem for the audience. Respect can be defined as an act of giving and displaying particular attention to the value you associate with someone or a group. Displays of respect include making time for conversation, not interrupting, and even giving appropriate eye contact during conversations.

Trust

Communication involves sharing and that requires trust. Trust means the ability to rely on the character or truth of someone, that what you say you mean and your audience knows it. Acknowledging trust and its importance in your relationship with the audience is the first step in focusing on this key characteristic.

Avoid Exploitation

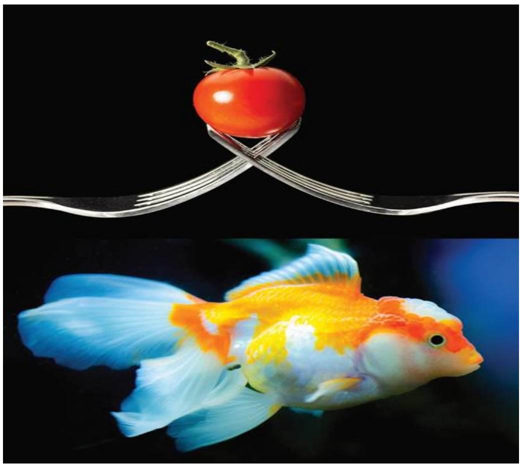
Finally, when we speak ethically, we do not intentionally exploit one another. Exploitation means taking advantage, using someone else for one's own purposes. Perceiving a relationship with an audience as a means to an end and only focusing on what you get out of it, will lead you to treat people as objects. The temptation to exploit others can be great in business situations, where a promotion, a bonus, or even one's livelihood are at stake.

Suppose you are a bank loan officer. Whenever a customer contacts the bank to inquire about applying for a loan, your job is to provide an informative presentation about the types of loans available, their rates and terms. If you are paid a commission based on the number of loans you make and their amounts and rates, wouldn't you be tempted to encourage them to borrow the maximum amount they can qualify for? Or perhaps to take a loan with confusing terms that will end up costing much more in fees and interest than the customer realizes? After all, these practices are within the law; aren't they just part of the way business is done? If you are an ethical loan officer, you realize you would be exploiting customers if you treated them this way. You know it is more valuable to uphold your long-term relationships with customers than to exploit them so that you can earn a bigger commission.

Consider these ethical principles when preparing and presenting your speech, and you will help address many of these natural expectations of others and develop healthier, more effective speeches.

Sample Informative Presentation

Here is a generic sample speech in outline form with notes and suggestions.



Introduction

1. Briefly introduce genetically modified foods.
2. State your topic and specific purpose: “My speech today will inform you on genetically modified foods that are increasingly part of our food supply.”
3. Introduce your credibility and the topic: “My research on this topic has shown me that our food supply has changed but many people are unaware of the changes.”
4. State your main points: “Today I will define genes, DNA, genome engineering and genetic manipulation, discuss how the technology applies to foods, and provide common examples.”

Body

1. Information. Provide a simple explanation of the genes, DNA and genetic modification in case there are people who do not know about it. Provide clear definitions of key terms.
2. Genes and DNA. Provide arguments by generalization and authority.
3. Genome engineering and genetic manipulation. Provide arguments by analogy, cause, and principle.
4. Case study. In one early experiment, GM (genetically modified) tomatoes were developed with fish genes to make them resistant to cold weather, although this type of tomato was never marketed.
5. Highlight other examples.

3.6 Creating an Informative Presentation

An informational presentation is common request in business and industry. It’s the verbal and visual equivalent of a written report. Informative presentations serve to present specific information for specific audiences for specific goals or functions. Table 7.1 below describes five main parts of a presentation to inform.

Table 7.1. Presentation Components and Their Functions. Lists the five main parts or components of any presentation (McLean, S., 2003).

Component	**Function**
Attention Statement	Raise interest and motivate the listener
Introduction	Communicate a point and common ground
Body	Address key points
Conclusion	Summarize key points
Residual Message	Communicate central theme, moral of story, or main point

Sample Speech Guidelines

Imagine that you have been assigned to give an informative presentation lasting five to seven minutes. Follow the guidelines in Table 7.2 below and apply them to your presentation.

Table 7.2. Sample speech guidelines. Seven key items.

Topic	Choose a product or service that interests you (if you have the option of choice) and report findings in your speech. Even if you are assigned a topic, find an aspect or angle that is of interest to research.
Purpose	Your general purpose, of course, is to inform. But you need to formulate a more specific purpose statement that expresses a point you have to make about your topic—what you hope to accomplish in your speech.
Audience	Think about what your audience might already know about your topic and what they may not know, and perhaps any attitudes toward or concerns about it. Consider how this may affect the way that you will present your information.
Supporting Materials	Using the information gathered in your search for information, determine what is most worthwhile, interesting, and important to include in your speech. Time limits will require that you be selective about what you use. Use visual aids!
Organization	• Write a central idea statement that expresses the message, or point, that you hope to get across to your listeners in the speech. • Determine the two to three main points that will be needed to support your central idea.

	• • Finally, prepare a complete sentence outline of the body of the speech.
Introduction	Develop an opening that will • get the attention and interest of your listeners, • express your central idea or message, • lead into the body of your speech.
Conclusion	The conclusion should review and/or summarize the important ideas in your speech and bring it to a smooth close.
Delivery	The speech should be delivered extemporaneously (not reading but speaking), using speaking notes and not reading from the manuscript. Work on maximum eye contact with your listeners. Use any visual aids or handouts that may be helpful.

Informative presentations illustrate, explain, describe, and instruct the audience on topics and processes.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

We can summarize that the purpose of an informative speech is to share ideas with the audience, increase their understanding, change their perceptions, or help them gain new skills. An informative speech incorporates the speaker's point of view but not attitude or interpretation. In preparing an informative speech, use your knowledge and consider the audience's knowledge, avoid unnecessary jargon, give credit to your sources, and present the information ethically. After reading this chapter, and returning to the challenge related to the development of an informational presentation on the environment, how might you ensure that he communicates his message to best inform his colleagues? How can he help ensure that his presentation is accurate and balanced? How might he avoid injecting his bias or personal opinions into the presentation?

3.8 FURTHER READING

- Great Canadian Speeches https://greatcanadianspeeches.ca
- For information on adapting your speech for an audience or audience members with special needs, explore this index of resources compiled by Ithaca College. http://www.ithaca.edu/wise/disabilities/

- Visit this site for list informative topics for a business speech. http://smallbusiness.chron.com/ideas-informative-speech-topics-business-81465.html

3.9 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Describe the functions of the speech to inform.
2. Provide examples of four main types of speech to inform.
3. Articulate and demonstrate an audience-centered perspective.
4. Provide and demonstrate examples of ways to facilitate active listening.
5. Discuss and provide examples of ways to incorporate ethics in a speech.

Unit 4: PRESENTATIONS TO PERSUADE

4

Unit Structure

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Principles Of Persuasion

4.4 Presentation That Persuade

4.5 Making an Argument

4.6 Elevator Speech

4.7 Speaking Ethically And Avoiding Fallacies

4.8 Let us sum up

4.9 Further Reading

4.10 Assignments

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to understand:

- What is Persuasion?
- Principles of Persuasion
- Persuasive Presentations
- Making an Argument
- Speaking Ethically and Avoiding Fallacies

4.2 INTRODUCTION

No doubt there has been a time when you wanted to achieve a goal or convince your manager about a work need and you thought about how you were going to present your request. Consider how often people—including people you have never met and never will meet—want something from you? When you watch television, advertisements reach out for your attention, whether you watch them or not. When you use the Internet, pop-up advertisements often appear. Most people are surrounded, even inundated by persuasive messages. Mass and social media in the 21st century have had a significant effect on persuasive communication that you will certainly recognize. This chapter is about how to communicate with persuasion and how to convince others to consider your point of view.

4.3 PRINCIPLES OF PERSUASION

Persuasion is an act or process of presenting arguments to move, motivate, or change your audience. Persuasion can be implicit or explicit and can have both positive and negative effects. In this chapter the importance of ethics will continued to be reviewed, especially related to presenting motivational arguments to your audience so that they will consider your points, adopt your view, or change their behavior.

Motivation is different from persuasion in that it involves the force, stimulus, or influence to bring about change. Persuasion is the process, and motivation is the compelling stimulus that encourages your audience to change their beliefs or behaviour, to adopt your position, or to consider your arguments.

4.3.1 Principles of Persuasion

What is the best way to succeed in persuading your listeners? There is no one "correct" answer, but many experts have studied persuasion and observed what works and what doesn't. Social psychologist Robert Cialdini (2006) offers us six principles of persuasion that are powerful and effective:

1. Reciprocity
2. Scarcity
3. Authority
4. Commitment and consistency
5. Consensus
6. Liking

4.3.2 Reciprocity

Reciprocity is the mutual expectation for exchange of value or service. In all cultures, when one person gives something, the receiver is expected to reciprocate. If you are in customer service and go out of your way to meet the customer's need, you are appealing to the principle of reciprocity with the knowledge that all humans perceive the need to reciprocate—in this case, by increasing the likelihood of making a purchase from you because you were especially helpful. Reciprocity builds trust and the relationship develops, reinforcing everything from personal to brand loyalty. By taking the lead and giving, you build in a moment where people will feel compelled from social norms and customs to give back.

4.3.3 Scarcity

You want what you can't have, and it's universal. People are naturally attracted to the exclusive, the rare, the unusual, and the unique. If they are convinced that they need to act now or it will disappear, they are motivated to action. Scarcity is the perception of inadequate supply or a limited resource. For a sales representative, scarcity may be a key selling point—the particular car, or theatre tickets or pair of shoes you are considering may be sold to someone else if you delay making a decision. By reminding customers not only of what they stand to gain but also of what they stand to lose, the representative increases the chances that the customer will make the shift from contemplation to action and decide to close the sale.

4.3.4 Authority

Trust is central to the purchase decision. Whom does a customer turn to? A salesperson may be part of the process, but an endorsement by an authority holds credibility that no one with a vested interest can ever attain. Knowledge of a product, field, trends in the field, and even research can make a salesperson more effective by the appeal to the principle of authority. It may seem like extra work to educate your customers, but you need to reveal your expertise to gain credibility. Reading the manual of a product is not sufficient to gain expertise—you have to do extra homework. The principle of authority involves referencing experts and expertise.

4.3.5 Commitment and Consistency

People like to have consistency in what is said to them or in writing. Therefore, it is important that all commitments made are honored at all times.

4.3.6 Consensus

Testimonials, or first person reports on experience with a product or service, can be highly persuasive. People often look to each other when making a purchase decision and the herd mentality is a powerful force across humanity.

Leverage testimonials from clients to attract more clients by making them part of your team. The principle of consensus involves the tendency of the individual to follow the lead of the group or peers.

4.3.7 Liking

We tend to be attracted to people who communicate to us that they like us, and who make us feel good about ourselves. Given a choice, these are the people with whom we are likely to associate. The principle of liking involves the perception of safety and belonging in communication.

4.4 PRESENTATION THAT PERSUADE

Persuasive presentations have the following features, they:

4.4.1 Stimulate

When you focus on stimulation as the goal of your speech, you want to reinforce existing beliefs, intensify them, and bring them to the forefront. By presenting facts, you will reinforce existing beliefs, intensify them, and bring the issue to the surface. You might consider the foundation of common ground and commonly held beliefs, and then introduce information that a mainstream audience may not be aware of that supports that common ground as a strategy to stimulate.

4.4.2 Convince

In a persuasive speech, the goal is to change the attitudes, beliefs, values, or judgments of your audience. If we look back at the idea of motive, in this speech the prosecuting attorney would try to convince the jury members that the defendant is guilty beyond reasonable doubt. He or she may discuss motive, present facts, all with the goal to convince the jury to believe or find that his or her position is true.

Audience members will also hold beliefs and are likely to involve their own personal bias. Your goal is to get them to agree with your position, so you will need to plan a range of points and examples to get audience members to consider your topic.

4.4.3 Include a Call to Action

Figure 8.1 below shows the “Reduce, reuse, recycle, repeat” slogan. The recycle movement is one of the most successful and persuasive call to action campaigns of the past twenty or more years in Canada (Babooram & Wang, 2007).

Figure 8.1. Reduce, reuse, recycle, repeat slogan.

When you call an audience to action with a speech, you are indicating that your purpose is not to stimulate interest, reinforce and accentuate beliefs, or convince them of a viewpoint. Instead, you want your listeners to do something, to change their behaviour in some way.

If you were a showroom salesperson at Toyota for example, you might include the concept that the purchase of a Prius hybrid model is a call to action against issues of global warming related to fossil fuel consumption. The economics, even at current gas prices, might not completely justify the difference in price between a hybrid and a non-hybrid car. However, if you as a salesperson can make a convincing argument that choosing a hybrid car is the right and responsible decision, you may be more likely to get the customer to act. The persuasive speech that focuses on action often generates curiosity, clarifies a problem, and as we have seen, proposes a range of solutions. They key difference here is there is a clear link to action associated with the solutions.

Solutions lead us to considering the goals of action. These goals address the question, "What do I want the audience to do as a result of being engaged by my speech?" The goals of action include adoption, discontinuance, deterrence, and continuance.

Adoption means the speaker wants to persuade the audience to take on a new way of thinking, or adopt a new idea. Examples could include buying a new product, or deciding to donate blood. The key is that the audience member adopts, or takes on,

Discontinuance involves the speaker persuading the audience to stop doing something what they have been doing. Rather than take on a new habit or action, the speaker is asking the audience member to stop an existing behaviour or idea.

Deterrence is a call to action that focuses on persuading the audience not to start something if they haven't already started. The goal of action would be to deter, or encourage the audience members to refrain from starting or initiating the behavior.

Finally, with **continuance**, the speaker aims to persuade the audience to continue doing what they have been doing, such as keep buying a product, or staying in school to get an education.

A speaker may choose to address more than one of these goals of action, depending on the audience analysis. If the audience is largely agreeable and supportive, you may find continuance to be one goal, while adoption is secondary.

Goals in call to action speeches serve to guide you in the development of solution steps. Solution steps involve suggestions or ways the audience can take action after your speech. Audience members appreciate a clear discussion of the problem in a persuasive speech, but they also appreciate solutions.

4.4.4 Increase Consideration

In a speech designed to increase consideration, you want to entice your audience to consider alternate viewpoints on the topic you have chosen. Audience members may hold views that are hostile in relation to yours, or perhaps they are neutral and simply curious about your topic. Returning to the Toyota salesperson example, you might be able to compare and contrast competing cars and show that the costs over ten years are quite similar. But the Prius has additional features that are the equivalent of a bonus, including high gas mileage. You might describe tax incentives for ownership, maintenance schedules and costs, and resale value. Your arguments and their support aim at increasing the audience's consideration of your position. You won't be asking for action in this presentation, but a corresponding increase of consideration may lead the customer to that point at a later date.

4.4.5 Develop Tolerance of Alternate Perspectives

Finally, you may want to help your audience develop tolerance of alternate perspectives and viewpoints. Perhaps your audience, as in the previous example, is interested in purchasing a car and you are the lead salesperson on that model. As you listen, and do your informal audience analysis, you may learn that horse- power and speed are important values to this customer. You might raise the issue of torque versus horse- power and indicate that the "uumph" you feel as you start a car off the line is torque. Many hybrid and even electric vehicles have great torque, as their systems involve fewer parts and less friction than a corresponding internal combustion-transaxle system. Your goal is to help your audience develop tolerance, but not necessarily acceptance, of alternate perspectives. By starting from common ground, and introducing a related idea, you are persuading your audience to consider an alternate perspective.

A persuasive speech may stimulate thought, convince, call to action, increase consideration, or develop tolerance of alternate perspectives.

4.5 MAKING AN ARGUMENT

When people argue, they are engaged in conflict and it's usually not pretty. It sometimes appears that way because people resort to fallacious arguments or false statements, or they simply do not treat each other with respect. They get defensive, try to prove their own points, and fail to listen to each other.

But this should not be what happens in persuasive argument. Instead, when you make an argument in a persuasive speech, you will want to present your position with logical points, supporting each point with appropriate sources. You will want to give your audience every reason to perceive you as an ethical and trustworthy speaker. Your audience will expect you to treat them with respect, and to present your argument in way that does not make them defensive. Contribute to your credibility by building sound arguments and using strategic arguments with skill and planning.

Stephen Toulmin's (1958) rhetorical strategy focuses on three main elements, shown in Table 8.1 as claim, data, and warrant.

Table 8.1 Rhetorical strategy.

Element	**Description**	**Example**
Claim	Your statement of belief or truth	It is important to spay or neuter your pet.
Data	Your supporting reasons for the claim	Millions of unwanted pets are euthanized annually.
Warrant	You create the connection between the claim and the supporting reasons	Pets that are spayed or neutered do not reproduce, pre-venting the production of unwanted animals.

This three-part rhetorical strategy is useful in that it makes the claim explicit, clearly illustrating the relationship between the claim and the data, and allows the listener to follow the speaker's reasoning. You may have a good idea or point, but your audience will be curious and want to know how you arrived at that claim or viewpoint. The warrant often addresses the inherent and often unspoken question, "Why is this data so important to your topic?" and helps you illustrate relationships between information for your audience. This model can help you clearly articulate it for your audience.

4.5.1 Appealing to Emotions

Emotions are a psychological and physical reaction, such as fear or anger, to stimuli that we experience as a feeling. Our feelings or emotions directly impact our own point of view and readiness to communicate, but also influence how, why, and when we say things. Emotions influence not only how you say what you say, but also how you hear and what you hear. At times, emotions can be challenging to control. Emotions will move your audience, and possibly even move you, to change or act in certain ways.

Be wary of overusing emotional appeals, or misusing emotional manipulation in presentations and communication. You may encounter emotional resistance from your audience. Emotional resistance involves get- ting tired, often to the point of rejection, of hearing messages that attempt to elicit an emotional response. Emotional appeals can wear out the audience's capacity to receive the message.
The use of an emotional appeal may also impair your ability to write persuasively or effectively. Never use a personal story, or even a story of someone you do not know, if the inclusion of that story causes you to lose control. While it's important to discuss relevant and sometimes emotionally difficult topics, you need to assess your own relationship to the message. Your documents should not be an exercise in therapy and you will sacrifice ethos and credibility, even your effectiveness, if you become angry or distraught because you are really not ready to discuss an issue you've selected.

Now that you've considered emotions and their role in a speech in general and a speech to persuade specifically, it's important to recognize the principles about emotions in communication that serve you well when speaking in public. DeVito (2003) offers five key principles to acknowledge the role emotions play in communication and offer guidelines for their expression.

Emotions Are Universal

Emotions are a part of every conversation or interaction that you have. Whether or not you consciously experience them while communicating with yourself or others, they influence how you communicate. By recognizing that emotions are a component in all communication interactions, you can place emphasis on understanding both the content of the message and the emotions that influence how, why, and when the content is communicated.

Expression of emotions is important, but requires the three T's: tact, timing, and trust. If you find you are upset and at risk of being less than diplomatic, or the timing is not right, or you are unsure about the level of trust, and then consider whether you can effectively communicate your emotions. By considering these three Ts, you can help yourself express your emotions more effectively.

Emotions Are Communicated Verbally and Nonverbally

You communicate emotions not only through your choice of words but also through the manner in which you say those words. The words themselves communicate part of your message, but the nonverbal cues, including inflection, timing, space, and paralanguage can modify or contradict your spoken message. Be aware that emotions are expressed in both ways and pay attention to how verbal and nonverbal messages reinforce and complement each other.

Emotional Expression Can Be Good and Bad

Expressing emotions can be a healthy activity for a relationship and build trust. It can also break down trust if expression is not combined with judgment. We're all different, and we all experience emotions, but how we express our emotions to ourselves and others can have a significant impact on our relationships.

Expressing frustrations may help the audience realize your point of view and see things as they have never seen them before. However, expressing frustrations combined with blaming can generate defensiveness and decrease effective listening. When you're expressing yourself, consider the audience's point of view, be specific about your concerns, and emphasize that your relationship with your listeners is important to you.

Emotions Are Often Contagious

It is important to recognize that we influence each other with our emotions, positively and negatively. Your emotions as the speaker can be contagious, so use your enthusiasm to raise the level of interest in your topic. Conversely, you may be subject to "catching" emotions from your audience.

4.6 ELEVATOR SPEECH

An elevator speech is to oral communication what a Twitter message (limited to 140 characters) is to written communication. An elevator speech is a presentation that persuades the listener in less than thirty seconds, or around a hundred words.

Creating an Elevator Speech

An elevator speech does not have to be a formal event, though it can be. An elevator speech is not a full sales pitch and should not get bloated with too much information. The idea is not to rattle off as much information as possible in a short time, nor to present a memorized thirty-second advertising message, but rather to give a relaxed and genuine “nutshell” summary of one main idea. The emphasis is on brevity, but a good elevator speech will address several key questions:

1. What is the topic, product or service?
2. Who are you?
3. Who is the target market? (if applicable)
4. What is the revenue model? (if applicable)
5. What or who is the competition and what are your advantages?

The following are the five key parts of your message:

- Attention Statement – Hook + information about you
- Introduction – What you offer
- Body – Benefits; what’s in it for the listener
- Conclusion – Example that sums it up
- Residual Message – Call for action

Example:

Person you’ve just met: How are you doing?

You: I'm great, how are you? [ensure that your conversation partner feels the conversation is a two-way street and that they might be interested in hearing your elevator speech]

Person you've just met: Very well thanks, what brings you to this conference?

You: Glad you asked. I'm with (X Company) and we just received this new (product x)—it is amazing. It beats the competition hands down for a third of the price. Smaller, faster, and less expensive make it a winner. It's already a sales leader. Hey, if you know anyone who might be interested, call me! (Hands business card to the listener as visual aid). So what brings you to this conference? [be a good listener]

You often don't know when opportunity to inform or persuade will present itself, but with an elevator speech, you are prepared!

4.7 SPEAKING ETHICALLY AND AVOIDING FALLACIES

What comes to mind when you think of speaking to persuade? Perhaps the idea of persuasion may bring to mind propaganda and issues of manipulation, deception, intentional bias, bribery, and even coercion. Each element relates to persuasion, but in distinct ways. We can recognize that each of these elements in some ways has a negative connotation associated with it. Why do you think that deceiving your audience, bribing a judge, or coercing people to do something against their wishes is wrong? These tactics violate our sense of fairness, freedom, and ethics.

Manipulation involves the management of facts, ideas or points of view to play upon inherent insecurities or emotional appeals to one’s own advantage. Your audience expects you to treat them with respect, and deliberately manipulating them by means of fear, guilt, duty, or a relationship is unethical.
In the same way, **deception** involves the use of lies, partial truths, or the omission of relevant information to deceive your audience. No one likes to be lied to, or made to believe something that is not true. Deception can involve intentional bias, or the selection of information to support your position while framing negatively any information that might challenge your belief.
Bribery involves the giving of something in return for an expected favour, consideration, or privilege. It circumvents the normal protocol for personal gain, and again is a strategy that misleads your audience.

Coercion is the use of power to compel action. You make someone do something they would not choose to do freely. While you may raise the issue that the ends justify the means, and you are “doing it for the audience’s own good,” recognize the unethical nature of coercion.

4.7.1 Eleven Points for Speaking Ethically

In his book Ethics in Human Communication Johannesen (1996) offers eleven points to consider when speaking to persuade. His main points reiterate many of the points across this chapter and should be kept in mind as you prepare, and present, your persuasive message.
Do not:

- use false, fabricated, misrepresented, distorted or irrelevant evidence to support arguments or claims
- intentionally use unsupported, misleading, or illogical reasoning
- represent yourself as informed or an “expert” on a subject when you are not
- use irrelevant appeals to divert attention from the issue at hand
- ask your audience to link your idea or proposal to emotion-laden values, motives, or goals to which it is actually not related

- deceive your audience by concealing your real purpose, by concealing self-interest, by concealing the group you represent, or by concealing your position as an advocate of a viewpoint
- distort, hide, or misrepresent the number, scope, intensity, or undesirable features of consequences or effects
- use “emotional appeals” that lack a supporting basis of evidence or reasoning.
- oversimplify complex, gradation-laden situations into simplistic, two-valued, either-or, polar views or choices
- pretend certainty where tentativeness and degrees of probability would be more accurate
- advocate something which you yourself do not believe in

In your speech to persuade, consider honesty and integrity as you assemble your arguments. Your audience will appreciate your thoughtful consideration of more than one view, your understanding of the complexity, and you will build your ethos, or credibility, as you present your document. Be careful not to stretch the facts, or assemble them only to prove yourself, and instead prove the argument on its own merits. Deception, coercion, intentional bias, manipulation and bribery should have no place in your speech to persuade.

Avoiding Fallacies

Fallacies are another way of saying false logic. These tricks deceive your audience with their style, drama, or pattern, but add little to your speech in terms of substance and can actually detract from your effectiveness.

In Table 8.2 below, eight classical fallacies are described. Learn to recognize these fallacies so they can’t be used against you, and so that you can avoid using them with your audience.

Table 8.2 Eight fallacies

Fallacy	Definition	Example
1. Red Herring	Any diversion intended to distract attention from the main issue, particularly by relating the issue to a common fear.	It's not just about the death penalty; it's about the victims and their rights. You wouldn't want to be a victim, but if you were, you'd want justice.
2. Straw Man	A weak argument set up to be easily refuted, distracting attention from stronger arguments	What if we released criminals who commit murder after just a few years of rehabilitation? Think of how unsafe our streets would be then!
Begging the Question Circular Argument	Claiming the truth of the very matter in question, as if it were already an obvious conclusion. The proposition is used to prove itself. Assumes the very thing it aims to prove. Related to begging the question.	We know that they will be released and unleashed on society to repeat their crimes again and again. Once a killer, always a killer.
Ad Populum	Appeals to a common belief of some people, often prejudicial, and states everyone holds this belief. Also called the Bandwagon Fallacy, as people "jump on the bandwagon" of a perceived popular view.	Most people would prefer to get rid of a few "bad apples" and keep our streets safe.
Ad Hominem	"Argument against the man" instead of against his message. Stating that someone's argument is wrong solely because of something about the person rather than about the argument itself.	Our representative is a drunk and philanderer. How can we trust him on the issues of safety and family?
7. Non Sequitur	"It does not follow." The conclusion does not follow from the premises. They are not related	Since the liberal anti-war demonstrations of the 1960s, we've seen an increase in con- victs who got let off death row.
8. Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc	"After this, therefore because of this," also called a coincidental correlation. It tries to establish a cause-and-effect relationship where only a correlation exists.	Violent death rates went down once they started publicizing executions.

4.8 LET SUM UP

A persuasive message can succeed through the principles of reciprocity, scarcity, authority, commitment and consistency, consensus, and liking. In summary, everyone experiences emotions, and as a persuasive speaker, you can choose how to express emotion and appeal to the audience's emotions.

4.9 FURTHER READING

- Justthink.org promotes critical thinking skills and awareness of the impact of images in the media among young people. http://www.change.org/organizations/just_think_foundation
- Visit this site for a video and other resources about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. http://www.abraham- maslow.com/m_motivation/Hierarchy_of_Needs.asp
- Read an informative article on negotiating face-to-face across cultures by Stella Ting-Toomey, https://www.sfu.ca/davidlamcentre/forum/past_PRF/PRF_1999/intercultural-conflict-competence- eastern-and-western-lenses.html
- Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) provides a guide to persuasive speaking strategies. http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/04
- Visit the CBC Podcasts page and assess the persuasive message of various programs. http://www.cbc.ca/ radio/podcasts/

4.10 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Identify and demonstrate how to use six principles of persuasion.
2. Describe similarities and differences between persuasion and motivation.
3. Identify and demonstrate the effective use of five functions of speaking to persuade.
4. Label and discuss three components of an argument.
5. Identify and provide examples of emotional appeals.
6. Demonstrate the importance of ethics as part of the persuasion process.

Block-3

Business Communication

Unit 1: INTRAPERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

1

Unit Structure

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to:

- What is business communication?
- Self-Concept
- Interpersonal needs
- Rituals of Conversation
- Employment Interviewing
- Conflict in the Work Environment

1.2 INTRODUCTION

You will be interviewing a group of potential employees to fill a role called “Library Coordinator.” In this role, an employee will need to have excellent communication skills to interact with a variety of visitors to the library including faculty members, staff, and students.

You want to ensure he includes some good questions in his interview script to determine interpersonal skills among the applicants. What types of questions might you ask to find out more from each candidate?

When asked the question, “What are you doing?” in a professional context, the answer typically involves communication; communication with self, with others, in verbal (oral and written) and nonverbal ways. How well do you communicate, and how does it influence your experience within the business environment?

Through communication, how might you negotiate relationships, demands for space and time, across meetings, collaborative efforts, and solo projects? In this chapter you will explore several concepts and attempt to answer the question, “What are you doing?” with the answer: communicating.

1.3 WHAT IS INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION?

Intrapersonal communication can be defined as communication with one’s self, and that may include self- talk, acts of imagination and visualization, and even recall and memory (McLean, 2005). You read on your phone that your friends are going to have dinner at your favourite restaurant. What comes to mind? Sights, sounds, and scents? Something special that happened the last time you were there? Do you contemplate joining them? Do you start to work out a plan of getting from your present location to the restaurant? Do you send your friends a text asking if they want company? Until the moment when you hit the "send" but- ton, you are communicating with yourself.

Communications expert Leonard Shedletsky examined intrapersonal communication through the eight basic components of the communication process (i.e., source, receiver, message, channel, feedback, environment, context, and interference) as transactional, but all the interaction occurs within the individual (Shedletsky, 1989).

From planning to problem solving, internal conflict resolution, and evaluations and judgments of self and others, we communicate with ourselves through intrapersonal communication.

All this interaction takes place in the mind without externalization, and all of it relies on previous interaction with the external world.

1.4 SELF CONCEPT

Returning to the question "what are you doing?" is one way to approach self-concept. If we define ourselves through our actions, what might those actions be, and are we no longer ourselves when we no longer engage in those activities? Psychologist Steven Pinker defines the conscious present as about three seconds for most people. Everything else is past or future (Pinker, 2009). Who are you at this moment in time, and will the self you become an hour from now be different from the self that is reading this sentence right now?

Just as the communication process is dynamic, not static (i.e., always changing, not staying the same), you too are a dynamic system. Physiologically your body is in a constant state of change as you inhale and exhale air, digest food, and cleanse waste from each cell. Psychologically you are constantly in a state of change as well. Some aspects of your personality and character will be constant, while others will shift and adapt to your environment and context. These complex combinations contribute to the self you call you. You may choose to define yourself by your own sense of individuality, personal characteristics, motivations, and actions (McLean, 2005), but any definition you create will likely fail to capture all of who you are, and who you will become.

Self-concept is “what we perceive ourselves to be,” (McLean,, 2005) and involves aspects of image and esteem. How we see ourselves and how we feel about ourselves influences how we communicate with others. What you are thinking now and how you communicate impacts and influences how others treat you. In a previous chapter you reviewed the concept of the looking-glass self. We look at how others treat us, what they say and how they say it, for clues about how they view us to gain insight into our own identity. Developing a sense of self as a communicator involves balance between constructive feedback from others and constructive self-affirmation. You judge yourself, as others do, and both views count.

Self-reflection is a trait that allows us to adapt and change to our context or environment, to accept or reject messages, to examine our concept of ourselves and choose to improve.

Internal monologue refers to the self-talk of intrapersonal communication. It can be a running monologue that is rational and reasonable, or disorganized and illogical. Your self-monologue can empower and energize you or it can unintentionally interfere with listening to others, impede your ability to focus, and become a barrier to effective communication.

You have to make a choice to listen to others when they communicate through the written or spoken word. Refraining from preparing your responses before others finish speaking (or before you finish reading what they have said) is good listening, and essential for relationship-building. It’s good listening practice to take mental note of when you jump to conclusions from only partially attending to the speaker or writer’s message. There is certainly value in choosing to listen to others in addition to yourself.

One principle of communication is that interaction is dynamic and changing. Interaction can be internal, as in intrapersonal communication, but can also be external. We may communicate with one other person and engage in paired interpersonal communication. If we engage two or more individuals, group communication is the result.

1.5 INTERPERSONAL NEEDS

We communicate with each other to meet our needs, regardless of how we define those needs. From the time you are a new born infant crying for food or the time you are a toddler learning to say “please” when requesting a cup of milk, to the time you are an adult learning the rituals of the job interview and the conference room, you learn to communicate in order to gain a sense of self within the group or community–meeting your basic needs as you grow and learn.

Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging messages between two people whose lives mutually influence one another in unique ways in relation to social and cultural norms (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2013). A brief exchange with a grocery store clerk who you don’t know wouldn’t be considered interpersonal communication, because you and the clerk are not influencing each other in significant ways. If the clerk were a friend, family member, co-worker, or romantic partner, the communication would fall into the interpersonal category.

Aside from making your relationships and health better, interpersonal communication skills are highly sought after by potential employers, consistently ranking in the top ten in national surveys (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2010). Interpersonal communication meets our basic needs as humans for security in our social bonds, health, and careers. But we are not born with all the interpersonal communication skills we’ll need in life.

1.5.1 Social Penetration Theory

How do you get to know other people? If the answer springs immediately to mind, we’re getting somewhere: communication. Communication allows us to share experiences, come to know ourselves and others, and form relationships, but it requires time and effort. Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor describe this progression from superficial to intimate levels of communication in social penetration theory, which is often called the Onion Theory because the model looks like an onion and involves layers that are peeled away (Altman & Taylor, 1973). According to social penetration theory, we fear that which we do not know. That includes people. Strangers go from being unknown to known through a series of steps that we can observe through conversational interactions.

At the outermost layer of the onion, in this model, there is only that which we can observe. We can observe characteristics about each other and make judgments, but they are educated guesses at best. Our nonverbal displays of affiliation, like a team jacket, a uniform, or a badge, may communicate something about us, but we only peel away a layer when we engage in conversation, oral or written.

As we move from public to private information we make the transition from small talk to substantial, and eventually intimate, conversations. Communication requires trust and that often takes time. Beginnings are fragile times and when expectations, roles, and ways of communicating are not clear, misunderstandings can occur.

According to the social penetration theory, people go from superficial to intimate conversations as trust develops through repeated, positive interactions. Self-disclosure is “information, thoughts, or feelings we tell others about ourselves that they would not otherwise know” (McLean, 2005). Taking it step by step, and not rushing to self-disclose or asking personal questions too soon, can help develop positive business relationships. Figure 9.1 below, an image of onion layers resembles the process of building interpersonal communication relationships.

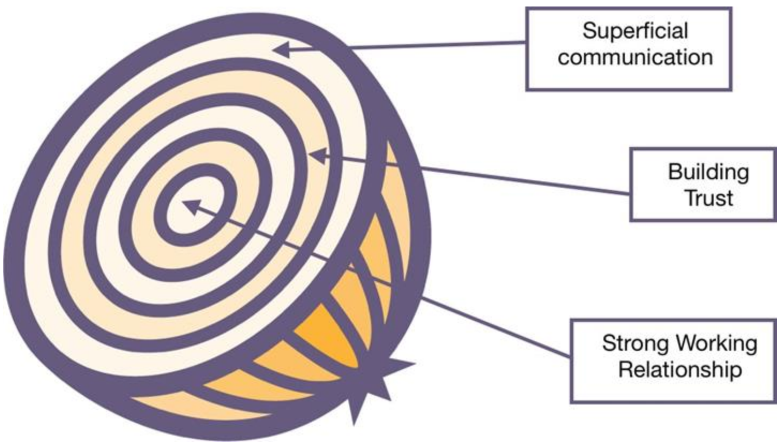


Figure 9.1. Layers of disclosure in interpersonal communication.

1.5.2 Principles of Self-Disclosure

From your internal monologue and intrapersonal communication, to verbal and nonverbal communication, communication is constantly occurring. What do you communicate about yourself by the clothes (or brands) you wear, the tattoos you display, or the piercing you remove before you enter the workplace? Self-disclosure is a process by which you intentionally communicate information to others, but can involve unintentional, but revealing slips.

1.5.3 Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal communication can be defined as communication between two people, but the definition fails to capture the essence of a relationship. This broad definition is useful when we compare it to intrapersonal communication, or communication with ourselves, as opposed to mass communication, or communication with a large audience, but it requires clarification. The developmental view of interpersonal communication places emphasis on the relationship rather than the size of the audience, and draws a distinction between impersonal and personal interactions.

For example, one day your co-worker and best friend, Iris, whom you've come to know on a personal as well as a professional level, gets promoted to the position of manager. She didn't tell you ahead of time because it wasn't certain, and she didn't know how to bring up the possible change of roles. Your relationship with Iris will change as your roles transform. Her perspective will change, and so will yours. You may stay friends, or she may not have as much time as she once did. Over time, you and Iris gradually grow apart, spending less time together. You eventually lose touch. What is the status of your relationship?

If you have ever had even a minor interpersonal transaction such as buying a cup of coffee from a clerk, you know that some people can be personable, but does that mean you've developed a relationship within the transaction process? For many people the transaction is an impersonal experience, however pleasant. What is the difference between the brief interaction of a transaction and the interactions you periodically have with your colleague, Iris, who is now your manager?

The developmental view places an emphasis on the prior history, but also focuses on the level of familiarity and trust. Over time and with increased frequency we form bonds or relationships with people, and if time and frequency are diminished, we lose that familiarity. The relationship with the clerk may be impersonal, but so can the relationship with the manager after time has passed and the familiarity is lost. From a developmental view, interpersonal communication can exist across this range of experience and interaction.

Regardless of whether we focus on collaboration or competition, we can see that interpersonal communication is necessary in the business environment. We want to know our place and role within the organization, accurately predict those within our proximity, and create a sense of safety and belonging. Family for many is the first experience in interpersonal relationships, but as we develop professionally, our relationships at work may take on many of the attributes we associate with family communication. We look to each other with similar sibling rivalries, competition for attention and resources, and support. The workplace and our peers can become as close, or closer, than our birth families, with similar challenges and rewards.

1.6 RITUALS OF CONVERSATION

You no doubt have participated in countless conversations throughout your life, and the process of how to conduct a conversation may seem so obvious that it needs no examination. Yet, all cultures have rituals of various kinds, and conversation is one of these universal rituals. A skilled business communicator knows when to speak, when to remain silent, and to always stop speaking before the audience stops listening. Expectations may differ based on the type of conversation and the knowledge and experience of participants, but here are the basic five steps of a conversation.

Photo by Kawtar CHERKAOUI on Unsplash

Steven Beebe, Susan Beebe, and Mark Redmond offer us five stages of conversation that are adapted here for our discussion (Beebe, Beebe, & Redmond, 2002).

1. Initiation

The first stage of conversation is called initiation, and requires you to be open to interact. How you communicate openness is up to you; it may involve nonverbal signals like eye contact or body positions, you may be smiling or facing the other person and making eye contact. For some, this may produce a degree of anxiety. If status and hierarchical relationships are present, it may be a question of who speaks when, according to cultural norms.

2. Preview

The preview is an indication, verbal or nonverbal, of what the conversation is about, both in terms of con- tent and in terms of the relationship. A word or two in the subject line of an e-mail may signal the topic, and the relationship between individuals, such as an employee-supervisor relationship, may be understood. A preview can serve to reduce uncertainty and signal intent.

3. Talking Point(s)

Joseph DeVito characterizes this step as getting down to business, reinforcing the goal orientation of the conversation (DeVito, 2003). In business communication, we often have a specific goal or series of points to address, but we cannot lose sight of the relationship messages within the discussion of content. By clearly articulating, either in written or oral form, the main points, you provide an outline or structure to the conversation.

4. Feedback

Similar to a preview step, this stage allows the conversational partners to clarify, restate, or discuss the points of the conversation to arrive at a sense of mutual understanding. Western cultures often get to the point rather quickly and once an understanding is established there is a quick move to the conclusion.

Feedback is an opportunity to make sure the interaction was successful the first time. Failure to attend to this stage can lead to the need for additional interactions, reducing efficiency across time.

5. Closing

The acceptance of feedback on both sides of the conversation often signals the transition to the conclusion of the conversation.

There are times when a conversational partner introduces new information in the conclusion, which can start the process all over again. You may also note that if words like “in conclusion” or “oh—one more thing” are used, a set of expectations is now in force. A conclusion has been announced and the listener expects it. If the speaker continues to recycle at this point, the listener’s listening skills are often not as keen as they were during the heat of the main engagement, and it may even produce frustration. People mentally shift to the next order of business and this transition must be negotiated successfully.

By mentioning a time, date, or place for future communication you can clearly signal that the conversation, although currently concluded, will continue later. In this way, you can often disengage successfully while demonstrating respect.

1.7 EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWING

In order to make the transition from an outsider to an insider in the business world, you’ll have to pass a series of tests, both informal and formal. One of the most common tests is known as an employment interview. An employment interview is an exchange between a candidate and a prospective employer (or their representative). It is a formal process with several consistent elements that you can use to guide your preparation.

Employment interviews come in all shapes and sizes, and may not be limited to only one exchange but one interaction. A potential employee may very well be screened by a computer (as the résumé is scanned) and interviewed online or via the telephone before the applicant ever meets a representative or panel of representatives. The screening process may include formal tests that include personality tests, background investigations, and consultations with previous employers.

Depending on the type of job you are seeking, you can anticipate answering questions, often more than once, to a series of people as you progress through a formal interview process. Just as you have the advantage of preparing for a speech with anticipation, you can apply the same research and public speaking skills to the employment interview.

The invitation to interview means you have been identified as a candidate who meets the minimum qualifications and demonstrate potential as a viable candidate. Your cover letter, résumé, or related application materials may demonstrate the connection between your preparation and the job duties, but now comes the moment where you will need to articulate those points out loud.

If we assume that you would like to be successful in your employment interviewing, then it makes sense to use the communication skills gained to date with the knowledge of interpersonal communication to maximize your performance. There is no one right or wrong way to prepare and present at your interview, just as each audience is unique, but we can prepare and anticipate several common elements.

1.7.1 Preparation

Would you prepare yourself before writing for publication or speaking in public? Of course. The same preparation applies to the employment interview. Briefly, the employment interview is a conversational exchange (even if it is in writing at first) where the participants try to learn more about each other. Both conversational partners will have goals in terms of content, and explicitly or implicitly across the conversational exchange will be relational messages. Attending to both points will strengthen your performance.

On the content side, if you have been invited for an interview, you can rest assured that you have met the basic qualifications the employer is looking for. Hopefully, this initiation signal means that the company or organization you have thoroughly researched is one you would consider as a potential employer. Perhaps you have involved colleagues and current employees of the organization in your research process and learned about several of the organization's attractive qualities as well as some of the challenges experienced by the people working there.

Businesses hire people to solve problems, so you will want to focus on how your talents, expertise, and experience can contribute to the organization's need to solve those problems. The more detailed your analysis of their current challenges, the better. You need to be prepared for standard questions about your education and background, but also see the opening in the conversation to discuss the job duties, the challenges inherent in the job, and the ways in which you believe you can meet these challenges. Take the opportunity to demonstrate the fact that you have "done your homework" in researching the company.

Table 9.1 “Interview Preparation Checklist” presents a checklist of what you should try to know before you consider yourself prepared for an interview.

Table 9.1 Interview Preparation Checklist

What to Know	Examples
Type of Interview	Will it be a behavioural interview, where the employer watches what you do in a given situation? Will you be asked technical questions or given a work sample? Or will you be interviewed over lunch or coffee, where your table manners and social skills will be assessed?
Type of Dress	Office attire varies by industry, so stop by the workplace and observe what workers are wearing if you can. If this isn’t possible, call and ask the human resources office what to wear—they will appreciate your wish to be prepared.
Company or Organization	Do a thorough exploration of the company’s website. If it doesn’t have one, look for business listings in the community online and in the phone directory. Contact the local chamber of commerce. At your library, you may have access to subscription sites such as Hoover’s Online (http://www.hoovers.com).
Job	Carefully read the ad you answered that got you the interview, and memorize what it says about the job and the qualifications the employer is seeking. Use the Internet to find sample job descriptions for your target job title. Make a written list of the job tasks and annotate the list with your skills, knowledge, and other attributes that will enable you to perform the job tasks with excellence.
Employer’s Needs	Check for any items in the news in the past couple of years involving the company name. If it is a small company, the local town newspaper will be your best source. In addition, look for any advertisements the company has placed, as these can give a good indication of the company’s goals.

1.7.2 Performance

You may want to know how to prepare for an employment interview, and we're going to take it for granted that you have researched the company, market, and even individuals in your effort to learn more about the opportunity. From this solid base of preparation, you need to begin to prepare your responses. Would you like some of the test questions before the test? Luckily for you, employment interviews involve a degree of uniformity across their many representations. Here are eleven common questions you are likely to be asked in an employment interview (McLean, 2005):

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Have you ever done this type of work before?
3. Why should we hire you?
4. What are your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
5. Give me an example of a time when you worked under pressure.
6. Tell me about a time you encountered (X) type of problem at work. How did you solve the problem?
7. Why did you leave your last job?
8. How has your education and/or experience prepared you for this job?
9. Why do you want to work here?
10. What are your long-range goals? Where do you see yourself three years from now?
11. Do you have any questions?

When you are asked a question in the interview, look for its purpose as well as its literal meaning. "Tell me about yourself" may sound like an invitation for you to share your text message win in last year's competition, but it is not. The employer is looking for someone who can address their needs.

In the same way, responses about your strengths are not an opening to brag, and your weakness not an invitation to confess. If your weakness is a tendency towards perfectionism, and the job you are applying for involves a detail orientation, you can highlight how your weaknesses may serve you well in the position.

You may be invited to participate in a conference call, and be told to expect it will last around twenty minutes. The telephone carries your voice and your words, but doesn't carry your nonverbal gestures. If you remember to speak directly into the telephone, look up and smile, your voice will come through clearly and you will sound competent and pleasant. When the interviewers ask you questions, keep track of the time, limiting each response to about a minute. If you know that a twenty-minute call is scheduled for a certain time, you can anticipate that your phone may ring may be a minute or two late, as interviews are often scheduled in a series while the committee is all together at one time. Even if you only have one interview, your interviewers will have a schedule and your sensitivity to it can help improve your performance.

You can also anticipate that the last few minutes will be set aside for you to ask your questions. This is your opportunity to learn more about the problems or challenges that the position will be addressing, allowing you a final opportunity to reinforce a positive message with the audience. Keep your questions simple, your attitude positive, and communicate your interest.

At the same time as you are being interviewed, know that you too are interviewing the prospective employer. If you have done your homework you may already know what the organization is all about, but you may still be unsure whether it is the right fit for you. Listen and learn from what is said as well as what is not said, and you will add to your knowledge base for wise decision-making in the future.

Above all, be honest, positive, and brief. You may have heard that the world is small and it is true. As you develop professionally, you will come to see how fields, organizations, and companies are interconnected in ways that you cannot anticipate. Your name and reputation are yours to protect and promote.

1.7.3 Post-performance

Remember that feedback is part of the communication process: follow up promptly with a thank-you note or email, expressing your appreciation for the interviewer’s time and interest. You may also indicate that you will call or email next week to see if they have any further questions for you.

You may receive a letter, note, or voicemail explaining that another candidate’s combination of experience and education better matched the job description. If this happens, it is only natural for you to feel disap- pointed. It is also only natural to want to know why you were not chosen, but be aware that for legal reasons most rejection notifications do not go into detail about why one candidate was hired and another was not. Contacting the company with a request for an explanation can be counterproductive, as it may be interpreted as a “sore loser” response. If there is any possibility that they will keep your name on file for future opportunities, you want to preserve your positive relationship.

Although you feel disappointed, don’t focus on the loss or all the hard work you’ve produced. Instead, focus your energies where they will serve you best. Review the process and learn from the experience, knowing that each audience is unique and even the most prepared candidate may not have been the right “fit.” Stay positive and connect with people who support you. Prepare, practice, and perform. Know that you as a person are far more than just a list of job duties. Focus on your skill sets: if they need improvement, consider additional education that will enhance your knowledge and skills. Seek out local resources and keep net- working. Have your professional interview attire clean and ready, and focus on what you can control—your preparation and performance.

1.8 CONFLICT IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The word “conflict” produces a sense of anxiety for many people, but it is part of the human experience. Just because conflict is universal does not mean that we cannot improve how we handle disagreements, misunderstandings, and struggles to understand or make ourselves understood.

Photo by Chris Sabor on Unsplash

Conflict is the physical or psychological struggle associated with the perception of opposing or incompatible goals, desires, demands, wants, or needs (McLean, 2005). When incompatible goals, scarce resources, or interference are present, conflict is a typical result, but it doesn’t mean the relationship is poor or failing. All relationships progress through times of conflict and collaboration. How we navigate and negotiate these challenges influences, reinforces, or destroys the relationship. Conflict is universal, but how and when it occurs is open to influence and interpretation. Rather than viewing conflict from a negative frame of reference, view it as an opportunity for clarification, growth, and even reinforcement of the relationship.

1.8.1 Conflict Management Strategies

As professional communicators, we can acknowledge and anticipate that conflict will be present in every context or environment where communication occurs. To that end, we can predict, anticipate, and formulate strategies to address conflict successfully. How you choose to approach conflict influences its resolution. Joseph DeVito (2003) offers several conflict management strategies that you might adapt and expand for your use.

1.8.2 Avoidance

You may choose to change the subject, leave the room, or not even enter the room in the first place, but the conflict will remain and resurface when you least expect it. Your reluctance to address the conflict directly is a normal response, and one which many cultures prize. In cultures where independence is highly valued, direct confrontation is more common. In cultures where the community is emphasized over the individual, indirect strategies may be more common. Avoidance allows for more time to resolve the problem, but can also increase costs associated with problem in the first place. Your organization or business will have policies and protocols to follow regarding conflict and redress, but it is always wise to consider the position of your conversational partner or opponent and to give them, as well as yourself, time to explore alternatives.

1.8.3 Defensiveness versus Supportiveness

Defensive communication is characterized by control, evaluation, and judgments, while supportive communication focuses on the points and not personalities. When we feel judged or criticized, our ability to listen can be diminished, and we may only hear the negative message. By choosing to focus on the message instead of the messenger, we keep the discussion supportive and professional.

1.8.4 Face-Detracting and Face-Saving

Communication is not competition. Communication is the sharing of understanding and meaning, but does everyone always share equally? People struggle for control, limit access to resources and information as part of territorial displays, and otherwise use the process of communication to engage in competition. People also use communication for collaboration. Both competition and collaboration can be observed in communication interactions, but there are two concepts central to both: face-detracting and face-saving strategies.

Face-detracting strategies involve messages or statements that take away from the respect, integrity, or credibility of a person. Face-saving strategies protect credibility and separate message from messenger. For example, you might say that "sales were down this quarter," without specifically noting who was responsible. Sales were simply down. If, however, you ask, "How does the sales manager explain the decline in sales?" you have specifically connected an individual with the negative news. While we may want to specifically connect tasks and job responsibilities to individuals and departments, in terms of language each strategy has distinct results.

Face-detracting strategies often produce a defensive communication climate, inhibit listening, and allow for little room for collaboration. To save-face is to raise the issue while preserving a supportive climate, allowing room in the conversation for constructive discussions and problem solving. By using a face-saving strategy to shift the emphasis from the individual to the issue, we avoid power struggles and personalities, providing each other space to save-face (Donohue & Klot, 1992).

In collectivist cultures, where the community's well-being is promoted or valued above that of the individual, face-saving strategies are common communicative strategies. In Japan, for example, to confront someone directly is perceived as humiliation, a great insult. In the United States, greater emphasis is placed on individual performance, and responsibility may be more directly assessed. If our goal is to solve a problem, and preserve the relationship, then consideration of a face-saving strategy should be one option a skilled business communicator considers when addressing negative news or information.

1.8.5 Empathy

Communication involves not only the words we write or speak, but how and when we write or say them. The way we communicate also carries meaning, and empathy for the individual involves attending to this aspect of interaction. Empathetic listening involves listening to both the literal and implied meanings within a message. By paying attention to feelings and emotions associated with content and information, we can build relationships and address conflict more constructively. In management, negotiating conflict is a common task and empathy is one strategy to consider when attempting to resolve issues.

1.8.6 Managing Your Emotions

There will be times in the work environment when emotions run high. Your awareness of them can help you clear your mind and choose to wait until the moment has passed to tackle the challenge.

Emotions can be contagious in the workplace, and fear of the unknown can influence people to act in irrational ways. The wise business communicator can recognize when emotions are on edge in themselves or others, and choose to wait to communicate, problem-solve, or negotiate until after the moment has passed.

1.8.7 Evaluations and Criticism in the Workplace

There may come a time, however, when evaluations involve criticism. Knowing how to approach this criticism can give you peace of mind to listen clearly, separating subjective, personal attacks from objective, constructive requests for improvement. Guffey offers us seven strategies for giving and receiving evaluations and criticism in the workplace that we have adapted here.

1.8.8 Listen without Interrupting

If you are on the receiving end of an evaluation, start by listening without interruption. Interruptions can be internal and external, and warrant further discussion. If your supervisor starts to discuss a point and you immediately start debating the point in your mind, you are paying attention to yourself and what you think they said or are going to say, and not that which is actually communicated. Let them speak while you listen, and if you need to take notes to focus your thoughts, take clear notes of what is said, also noting points to revisit later.

1.8.9 Determine the Speaker's Intent

We have discussed previews as a normal part of conversation, and in this context they play an important role. People want to know what is coming and generally dislike surprises, particularly when the context of an evaluation is present. If you are on the receiving end, you may need to ask a clarifying question if it doesn't count as an interruption. You may also need to take notes and write down questions that come to mind to address when it is your turn to speak. As a manager, be clear and positive in your opening and lead with praise. You can find one point, even if it is only that the employee consistently shows up to work on time, to highlight before transitioning to a performance issue.

1.8.10 Indicate You Are Listening

In many Western cultures, eye contact is a signal that you are listening and paying attention to the person speaking. Take notes, nod your head, or lean forward to display interest and listening. Regardless of whether you are the employee receiving the criticism or the supervisor delivering it, displaying listening behaviour engenders a positive climate that helps mitigate the challenge of negative news or constructive criticism.

1.8.11 Paraphrase

Restate the main points to paraphrase what has been discussed. This verbal display allows for clarification and acknowledges receipt of the message.

If you are the employee, summarize the main points and consider steps you will take to correct the situation. If none come to mind or you are nervous and are having a hard time thinking clearly, state out loud the main point and ask if you can provide solution steps and strategies at a later date. You can request a follow- up meeting if appropriate, or indicate you will respond in writing via e-mail to provide the additional information.

1.8.12 If You Agree

If an apology is well deserved, offer it. Communicate clearly what will change or indicate when you will respond with specific strategies to address the concern. As a manager you will want to formulate a plan that addresses the issue and outlines responsibilities as well as time frames for corrective action. As an employee you will want specific steps you can both agree on that will serve to solve the problem. Clear communication and acceptance of responsibility demonstrates maturity and respect.

1.8.13 If You Disagree

If you disagree, focus on the points or issue and not personalities. Do not bring up past issues and keep the conversation focused on the task at hand. You may want to suggest, now that you better understand their position, a follow-up meeting to give you time to reflect on the issues. You may want to consider involving a third party, investigating to learn more about the issue, or taking time to cool off.

Do not respond in anger or frustration; instead, always display professionalism. If the criticism is unwarranted, consider that the information they have may be flawed or biased, and consider ways to learn more about the case to share with them, searching for a mutually beneficial solution.

If other strategies to resolve the conflict fail, consider contacting your human resources department to learn more about due process procedures at your workplace. Display respect and never say anything that would reflect poorly on yourself or your organization. Words spoken in anger can have a lasting impact and are impossible to retrieve or take back.

1.8.14 Learn from Experience

Every communication interaction provides an opportunity for learning if you choose to see it. Sometimes the lessons are situational and may not apply in future contexts. Other times the lessons learned may well serve you across your professional career. Taking notes for yourself to clarify your thoughts, much like a journal, serve to document and help you see the situation more clearly.

Recognize that some aspects of communication are intentional, and may communicate meaning, even if it is hard to understand. Also, know that some aspects of communication are unintentional, and may not imply meaning or design.

People make mistakes. They say things they should not have said. Emotions are revealed that are not always rational, and not always associated with the current context. A challenging morning at home can spill over into the work day and someone's bad mood may have nothing to do with you.

1.9 LET US SUM UP

To summarize, self-concept involves multiple dimensions and is expressed as internal monologue and social comparisons. Self-concept can be informed by engaging in dialogue with one or more people, and through reading or listening to spoken works; attending to what others communicate can add value to your self-concept. The interpersonal relationships are an important part of the work environment. We come to know one another gradually (layer by layer). The principle of self-disclosure is a normal part of communication. The conversations have universal aspects we can predict and improve. We can use the dynamics of the ritual of conversation to learn to prepare for employment interviews and evaluations, both common contexts of communication in the work environment. Employment interviews involve preparation, performance, and feedback. The conflict is unavoidable and can be opportunity for clarification, growth, and even reinforcement of the relationship. Try to distinguish between what you can control and what you cannot, and always choose professionalism.

1.10 FURTHER READING

- A Literary Devices article describes the literary devices of “interior monologue” and stream of conscious- ness. http://literarydevices.net/stream-of-consciousness/
- Read an informative article on self-concept and self-esteem by Arash Farzaneh. http://psychol-ogy.suite101.com/article.cfm/impact_of_selfconcept_and_selfesteem_on_life
- Advice from Monster.ca on Job Interviews https://www.monster.ca/career-advice/article/interview-per- formance-tips-canada
- Globe and Mail: Conflict-management skills now in high demand in the workplace https://www.theglobeand- mail.com/report-on-business/careers/career-advice/life-at-work/conflict-management-skills-now-in- high-demand-in-workplaces/article29722270/

1.11 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Define intrapersonal and interpersonal communication.
2. Give examples of interpersonal needs in the communication process.
3. Discuss social penetration theory and self-disclosure and its principles.
4. List five steps in any conversation.
5. Describe several strategies for resolving workplace conflict related to evaluations and criticism.

Unit 2: INTERCULTURAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

2

Unit Structure

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Intercultural Communication

2.4 Common Cultural Characteristics

2.5 Divergent Cultural Characteristics

2.6 International Communication and the Global Marketplace

2.7 Styles of Management

2.8 Let us sum up

2.9 Further Reading

2.10 Assignments

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After studying this unit student should be able to:

- Intercultural Communication
- Common Cultural Characteristics
- Divergent Cultural Characteristics
- International Communication and the Global Marketplace
- Styles of Management

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Culture is a complicated word to define, as there are several ways that culture is used in business contexts. For the purposes of this chapter, culture is defined as the on-going negotiation of learned and patterned beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours. Unpacking the definition, we can see that culture shouldn't be conceptualized as stable and unchanging. Culture is "negotiated," and as you will learn later in this chapter, culture is dynamic, and cultural changes can be traced and analysed to better understand why our society is the way it is. The definition also points out that culture is learned, which accounts for the importance of socializing institutions like family, school, peers, and the media. Culture is patterned in that there are recognizable widespread similarities among people within a cultural group. There is also deviation from and resistance to those patterns by individuals and subgroups within a culture, which is why cultural patterns change over time. Last, the definition acknowledges that culture influences your beliefs about what is true and false, your attitudes including your likes and dislikes, your values regarding what is right and wrong, and your behaviours. It is from these cultural influences that your identities are formed.

2.3 INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Culture involves beliefs, attitudes, values, and traditions that are shared by a group of people. Thus, you must consider more than the clothes you wear, the movies you watch, or the video games you play, all representations of environment, as culture. Culture also involves the psychological aspects of your expectations of the communication context. From the choice of words (message), to how you communicate (in person, or by e-mail), to how you acknowledge understanding with a nod or a glance (nonverbal feedback), to the internal and external interference, all aspects of communication are influenced by culture.

It is through intercultural communication that you come to create, understand, and transform culture and identity. Intercultural communication is communication between people with differing cultural identities. One reason you should study intercultural communication is to foster greater self-awareness (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Your thought process regarding culture is often "other focused," meaning that the culture of the other person or group is what stands out in your perception. However, the old adage "know thyself" is appropriate, as you become more aware of your own culture by better understanding other cultures and perspectives. Intercultural communication can allow you to step outside of your comfortable, usual frame of reference and see your culture through a different lens. Additionally, as you become more self-aware, you may also become more ethical communicators as you challenge your ethnocentrism, or your tendency to view your own culture as superior to other cultures.

Ethnocentrism makes you far less likely to be able to bridge the gap with others and often increases intolerance of difference. Business and industry are no longer regional, and in your career, you will necessarily cross borders, languages, and cultures. You will need tolerance, understanding, patience, and openness to difference. A skilled business communicator knows that the process of learning is never complete, and being open to new ideas is a key strategy for success.

Communication with yourself is called **intrapersonal** communication, which may also be intracultural, as you may only represent one culture. But most people belong to multiple groups, each with their own culture. Does a conversation with yourself ever involve competing goals, objectives, needs, wants, or values? How did you learn of those goals, or values? Through communication within and between individuals many cultures are represented. You may struggle with the demands of each group and their expectations and could consider this internal struggle intercultural conflict or simply intercultural communication.

Culture is part of the very fabric of our thought, and you cannot separate yourself from it, even as you leave home, defining yourself anew in work and achievements. Every business or organization has a culture, and within what may be considered a global culture, there are many subcultures or co-cultures. For example, consider the difference between the sales and accounting departments in a corporation. You can quickly see two distinct groups with their own symbols, vocabulary, and values. Within each group, there may also be smaller groups, and each member of each department comes from a distinct background that in itself influences behavior and interaction.

Intercultural communication is a fascinating area of study within business communication, and it is essential to your success. One idea to keep in mind as you examine this topic is the importance of considering multiple points of view. If you tend to dismiss ideas or views that are “unalike culturally,” you will find it challenging to learn about diverse cultures. If you cannot learn, how can you grow and be successful?

2.3.1 How to Understand Intercultural Communication

The American anthropologist Edward T. Hall is often cited as a pioneer in the field of intercultural communication (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Born in 1914, Hall spent much of his early adulthood in the multicultural setting of the American Southwest, where Native Americans, Spanish-speakers, and descendents of pioneers came together from diverse cultural perspectives. He then travelled the globe during World War II and later served as a U.S. State Department official. Where culture had once been viewed by anthropologists as a single, distinct way of living, Hall saw how the perspective of the individual influences interaction. By focus- ing on interactions rather than cultures as separate from individuals, he asked people to evaluate the many cultures they belong to or are influenced by, as well as those with whom they interacted. While his view makes the study of intercultural communication far more complex, it also brings a healthy dose of reality to the discussion. Hall is generally credited with eight contributions to the study of intercultural communication as follows:

1. Compare cultures. Focus on the interactions versus general observations of culture.
2. Shift to local perspective. Local level versus global perspective.
3. You don't have to know everything to know something. Time, space, gestures, and gender roles can be studied, even if we lack a larger understanding of the entire culture.
4. There are rules we can learn. People create rules for themselves in each community that we can learn from, compare, and contrast.
5. Experience counts. Personal experience has value in addition to more comprehensive studies of inter- action and culture.
6. Perspectives can differ. Descriptive linguistics serves as a model to understand cultures, and the U.S. Foreign Service adopted it as a base for training.
7. Intercultural communication can be applied to international business. U.S. Foreign Service training yielded applications for trade and commerce and became a point of study for business majors.
8. It integrates the disciplines. Culture and communication are intertwined and bring together many academic disciplines (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990; McLean, 2005).

The American psychologist Gordon Allport explored how, when, and why people formulate or use stereotypes to characterize distinct groups. When you do not have enough contact with people or their cultures to understand them well, you tend to resort to stereotypes (Allport, 1958).

As Hall notes, experience has value. If you do not know a culture, you should consider learning more about it first-hand if possible. The people you interact with may not be representative of the culture as a whole, but that is not to say that what you learn lacks validity. Quite the contrary; Hall asserts that you can, in fact, learn something without understanding everything, and given the dynamic nature of communication and culture, who is to say that your lessons will not serve you well? Consider a study abroad experience if that is an option for you, or learn from a classmate who comes from a foreign country or an unfamiliar culture. Be open to new ideas and experiences, and start investigating. Many have gone before you, and today, unlike in generations past, much of the information is accessible. Your experiences will allow you to learn about another culture and yourself, and help you to avoid prejudice.

Prejudice involves a negative preconceived judgment or opinion that guides conduct or social behaviour (McLean., 2005). As an example, imagine two people walking into a room for a job interview.

You are tasked to interview both, and having read the previous section, you know that Allport (1958) rings true when he says we rely on stereotypes when encountering people or cultures with which we have had little contact. Will the candidates' dress, age, or gender influence your opinion of them? Will their race or ethnicity be a conscious or subconscious factor in your thinking process? Allport's work would indicate that those factors and more will make you likely to use stereotypes to guide your expectations of them and your subsequent interactions with them.

People who treat other with prejudice often make assumptions, or take preconceived ideas for granted without question, about the group or communities. As Allport illustrated, you often assume characteristics about groups with which you have little contact. Sometimes you also assume similarity, thinking that people are all basically similar. This denies cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and many other valuable, insightful differences.

2.4 COMMON CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Groups come together, form cultures, and grow apart across time. How do you become a member of a community, and how do you know when you are full member? What aspects of culture do people have in common and how do they relate to business communication? Researchers who have studied cultures around the world have identified certain characteristics that define a culture. These characteristics are expressed in different ways, but they tend to be present in nearly all cultures.

2.4.1 Rites of Initiation

Cultures tend to have a ritual for becoming a new member. A newcomer starts out as a nonentity, a stranger, an unaffiliated person with no connection or even possibly awareness of the community. Newcomers who stay around and learn about the culture become members. Most cultures have a rite of initiation that marks the passage of the individual within the community; some of these rituals may be so informal as to be hardly noticed (e.g., the first time a coworker asks you to join the group to eat lunch together), while others may be highly formalized (e.g., the ordination of clergy in a religion). The nonmember becomes a member, the new member becomes a full member, and individuals rise in terms of responsibility and influence.

Across the course of your life, you have no doubt passed several rites of initiation but may not have taken notice of them. Did you earn a driver's license, register to vote, or acquire the permission to purchase alcohol? In North American culture, these three common markers indicate the passing from a previous stage of life to a new one, with new rights and responsibilities.

Rites of initiation mark the transition of the role or status of the individual within the group. Your first day on the job may have been a challenge as you learned your way around the physical space, but the true challenge was to learn how the group members communicate with each other. If you graduate from college with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree, you will already have passed a series of tests, learned terms and theories, and possess a symbol of accomplishment in your diploma, but that only grants you the opportunity to look for a job—to seek access to a new culture.

In every business, there are groups, power struggles, and unspoken ways that members earn their way from the role of a “newbie” to that of a full member. The newbie may get the tough account, the office without a window, or the cubicle next to the bathroom, denoting low status. As the new member learns to navigate through the community—establishing a track record and being promoted—he passes the rite of initiation and acquires new rights and responsibilities.

Over time, the person comes to be an important part of the business, a “keeper of the flame.” The “flame” may not exist in physical space or time, but it does exist in the minds of those members in the community who have invested time and effort in the business. It is not a flame to be trusted to a new person, as it can only be earned with time. Along the way, there may be personality conflicts and power struggles over resources and perceived scarcity (e.g., there is only one promotion and everyone wants it). All these challenges are to be expected in any culture.

2.4.2 Common History and Traditions

Think for a moment about the history of a business like Tim Hortons—what are your associations with Tim Horton, the relationship between hockey, coffee, and donuts? Traditions form as the organization grows and expands, and stories are told and retold to educate new members on how business should be conducted.

The history of every culture, of every corporation, influences the present. There are times when the phrase “we’ve tried that before” can become stumbling block for members of the organization as it grows and adapts to new market forces. There may be struggles between members who have weathered many storms and new members, who come armed with new educational perspectives, technological tools, or experiences that may contribute to growth.

2.4.3 Common Values and Principles

Cultures all hold values and principles that are commonly shared and communicated from older members to younger (or newer) ones. Time and length of commitment are associated with an awareness of these values and principles, so that new members, whether they are socialized at home, in school, or at work, may not have a thorough understanding of their importance.

2.4.4 Common Purpose and Sense of Mission

Cultures share a common sense of purpose and mission. Why are we here and whom do we serve? These are fundamental questions of the human condition that philosophers and theologians all over the world have pondered for centuries. In business, the answers to these questions often address purpose and mis- sion, and they can be found in mission and vision statements of almost every organization. Individual mem- bers will be expected to acknowledge and share the mission and vision, actualize them, or make them real through action. Without action, the mission and vision statements are simply an arrangement of words. As a guide to individual and group behavioural norms, they can serve as a powerful motivator and a call to action. For example, Boeing Canada’s Purpose and Mission, and Aspiration statements are as follows:

Purpose and Mission: Connect, Protect, Explore and Inspire the World through Aerospace Innovation

Aspiration: Best in Aerospace and Enduring Global Industrial Champion

Based on these two statements, employees might expect a culture of innovation, quality, and safety as core to their work. What might those concepts mean in your everyday work if you were part of Boeing “culture?”

2.4.5 Common Symbols, Boundaries, Status, Language, and Rituals

Many people learn early in life what a stop sign represents, but not everyone knows what a ten-year service pin on a lapel, or a corner office with two windows means. Cultures have common symbols that mark them as a group; the knowledge of what a symbol stands for helps to reinforce who is a group member and who is not. Cultural symbols include dress, such as the Western business suit and tie. Symbols also include slogans or sayings, such as “Mr. Christie you make good cookies” or “Noooobody”. The slogan may serve a marketing purpose but may also embrace a mission or purpose within the culture. Family crests and clan tartan pat- terns serve as symbols of affiliation. Symbols can also be used to communicate rank and status within a group.

Space is another common cultural characteristic; it may be a nonverbal symbol that represents status and power. In most of the world’s cultures, a person occupying superior status is entitled to a physically elevated position—a throne, a dais, a podium from which to address subordinates. Subordinates may be expected to bow, curtsy, or lower their eyes as a sign of respect. In business, the corner office may offer the best view with the most space. Movement from a cubicle to a private office may also be a symbol of transition within an organization, involving increased responsibility as well as power. Parking spaces, the kind of vehicle you drive, and the transportation allowance you have may also serve to communicate symbolic meaning within an organization.

The office serves our discussion on the second point concerning boundaries. Would you sit on your boss’s desk or sit in his chair with your feet up on the desk in his presence? Most people indicate they would not, because doing so would communicate a lack of respect, violate normative space expectations, and invite retaliation. Still, subtle challenges to authority may arise in the workplace. A less than flattering photograph of the boss at the office party posted to the recreational room bulletin board communicates more than a lack of respect for authority. By placing the image anonymously in a public place, the prankster clearly communicates a challenge, even if it is a juvenile one. Movement from the cubicle to the broom closet may be the result for someone who is found responsible for the prank. Again, there are no words used to communicate meaning, only symbols, but those symbols represent significant issues.

Communities have their own vocabulary and way in which they communicate. Consider the person who uses a sewing machine to create a dress and the accountant behind the desk; both are professionals and both have specialized jargon used in their field. If they were to change places, the lack of skills would pre- sent an obstacle, but the lack of understanding of terms, how they are used, and what they mean would also severely limit their effectiveness. Those terms and how they are used are learned over time and through interaction. While a textbook can help, it cannot demonstrate use in live interactions. Cultures are dynamic systems that reflect the communication process itself.

Cultures celebrate heroes, denigrate villains, and have specific ways of completing jobs and tasks. In business and industry, the emphasis may be on effectiveness and efficiency, but the practice can often be "because that is the way we have always done it." Rituals serve to guide our performance and behaviour and may be limited to small groups or celebrated across the entire company.

Rituals can serve to bind a group together, or to constrain it. Institutions tend to formalize processes and then have a hard time adapting to new circumstances. While the core values or mission statement may hold true, the method of doing things that worked in the past may not be as successful as it once was. Adaptation and change can be difficult for individuals and companies, and yet all communities, cultures, and communication contexts are dynamic, or always changing. As much as we might like things to stay the same, they will always change—and we will change with (and be changed by) them.

2.5 DIVERGENT CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

We are not created equal. Cultures reflect this inequality, this diversity, and the divergent range of values, symbols, and meanings across communities. People have viewpoints, and they are shaped by their interactions with communities. Let's examine several points of divergence across cultures.

Source: Pixabay.com

2.5.1 Individualistic versus Collectivist Cultures

The Dutch researcher Geert Hofstede explored the concepts of individualism and collectivism across diverse cultures (Hofstede, 2005). He found that in individualistic cultures like the United States and Canada, people value individual freedom and personal independence, and perceive their world primarily from their own viewpoint. They perceive themselves as empowered individuals, capable of making their own decisions, and able to make an impact on their own lives.

Cultural viewpoint is not an either/or dichotomy, but rather a continuum or range. You may belong to some communities that express individualistic cultural values, while others place the focus on a collective view- point. Collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 1982), including many in Asia and South America, focus on the needs of the nation, community, family, or group of workers. Ownership and private property is one way to examine this difference. In some cultures, property is almost exclusively private, while others tend toward community ownership. The collectively owned resource returns benefits to the community. Water, for example, has long been viewed as a community resource, much like air, but that has been changing as business and organizations have purchased water rights and gained control over resources. How does someone raised in a culture that emphasizes the community interact with someone raised in a primarily individualistic culture? How could tensions be expressed and how might interactions be influenced by this point of divergence? In the following sections these viewpoints will be examined.

2.5.2 Explicit-Rule Cultures versus Implicit-Rule Cultures

Do you know the rules of your business or organization? Did you learn them from an employee manual or by observing the conduct of others? Your response may include both options, but not all cultures communicate rules in the same way. In an explicit-rule culture, where rules are clearly communicated so that everyone is aware of them, the guidelines and agenda for a meeting are announced prior to the gathering. In an implicit- rule culture, where rules are often understood and communicated nonverbally, there may be no agenda.

Everyone knows why they are gathered and what role each member plays, even though the expectations may not be clearly stated. Power, status, and behavioural expectations may all be understood, and to the person from outside this culture, it may prove a challenge to understand the rules of the context.

Outsiders often communicate their “otherness” by not knowing where to stand, when to sit, or how to initiate a conversation if the rules are not clearly stated. While it may help to know that implicit-rule cultures are often more tolerant of deviation from the understood rules, the newcomer will be wise to learn by observing quietly—and to do as much research ahead of the event as possible.

2.5.3 Uncertainty-Accepting Cultures versus Uncertainty-Rejecting Cultures

When people meet each other for the first time, they often use what they have previously learned to under- stand their current context. People also do this to reduce uncertainty. Some cultures, such as the United States and Britain, are highly tolerant of uncertainty, while others go to great lengths to reduce the element of surprise. Cultures in the Arab world, for example, are high in uncertainty avoidance; they tend to be resistant to change and reluctant to take risks. Whereas a U.S. business negotiator might enthusiastically agree to try a new procedure, the

Egyptian counterpart would likely refuse to get involved until all the details are worked out.

Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975) developed Uncertainty Reduction theory to examine this dynamic aspect of communication. Here are seven axioms of uncertainty:

1. There is a high level of uncertainty at first. As we get to know one another, our verbal communication increases and our uncertainty begins to decrease.
2. Following verbal communication, nonverbal communication increases, uncertainty continues to decrease, and more nonverbal displays of affiliation, like nodding one's head to indicate agreement, will start to be expressed.
3. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, we tend to increase our information-seeking behaviour, perhaps asking questions to gain more insight. As our understanding increases, uncertainty decreases, as does the information-seeking behaviour.
4. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, the communication interaction is not as personal or intimate. As uncertainty is reduced, intimacy increases.
5. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, communication will feature more reciprocity, or displays of respect. As uncertainty decreases, reciprocity may diminish.
6. Differences between people increase uncertainty, while similarities decrease it.
7. Higher levels of uncertainty are associated with a decrease in the indication of liking the other person, while reductions in uncertainty are associated with liking the other person more.

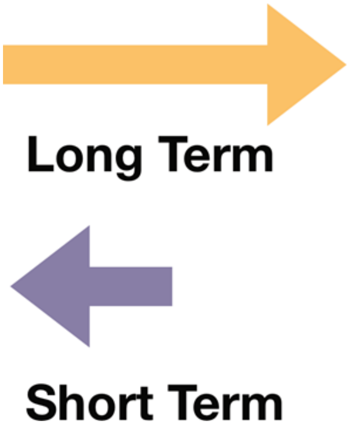
2.5.4 Time Orientation

Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall (1987) state that monochronic time-oriented cultures consider one thing at a time, whereas polychronic time-oriented cultures schedule many things at one time, and time is considered in a more fluid sense. In monochromatic time, interruptions are to be avoided, and everything has its own specific time. Even the multitasker from a monochromatic culture will, for example, recognize the value of work first before play or personal time. Canada, Germany, and Switzerland are often noted as countries that value a monochromatic time orientation.

Polychromatic time looks a little more complicated, with business and family mixing with dinner and dancing. Greece, Italy, Chile, and Saudi Arabia are countries where one can observe this perception of time; business meetings may be scheduled at a fixed time, but when they actually begin may be another story. Also note that the dinner invitation for 8 p.m. may in reality be more like 9 p.m. If you were to show up on time, you might be the first person to arrive and find that the hosts are not quite ready to receive you.

When in doubt, always ask before the event; many people from polychromatic cultures will be used to foreigner's tendency to be punctual, even compulsive, about respecting established times for events. The skilled business communicator is aware of this difference and takes steps to anticipate it. The value of time in different cultures is expressed in many ways, and your understanding can help you communicate more effectively.

2.5.5 Short-Term versus Long-Term Orientation



Source: ecampusontario

Do you want your reward right now or can you dedicate yourself to a long-term goal? You may work in a culture whose people value immediate results and grow impatient when those results do not materialize. Geert Hofstede discusses this relationship of time orientation to a culture as a "time horizon," and it under- scores the perspective of the individual within a cultural context. Many countries in Asia, influenced by the teachings of Confucius, value a long-term orientation, whereas other countries, including Canada, have a more short-term approach to life and results. Indigenous peoples are known for holding a long-term orientation driven by values of deep, long-term reflection and community consultation.

If you work within a culture that has a short-term orientation, you may need to place greater emphasis on reciprocation of greetings, gifts, and rewards. For example, if you send a thank-you note the morning after being treated to a business dinner, your host will appreciate your promptness. While there may be a respect for tradition, there is also an emphasis on personal representation and honour, a reflection of identity and integrity. Personal stability and consistency are also valued in a short-term oriented culture, contributing to an overall sense of predictability and familiarity.

Long-term orientation is often marked by persistence, thrift and frugality, and an order to relationships based on age and status. A sense of shame for the family and community is also observed across generations. What an individual does reflects on the family and is carried by immediate and extended family members.

2.5.6 Masculine versus Feminine Orientation

Hofstede (2009) describes the masculine-feminine dichotomy not in terms of whether men or women hold the power in a given culture, but rather the extent to which that culture values certain traits that may be considered masculine or feminine. Thus, "the assertive pole has been called 'masculine' and the modest, car- ing pole 'feminine.' The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values" (Hofstede, 2009).

You can observe this difference in where people gather, how they interact, and how they dress. You can see it during business negotiations, where it may make an important difference in the success of the organizations involved. Cultural expectations precede the interaction, so someone who doesn't match those expectations may experience tension. Business in Canada still has a masculine orientation—assertiveness and competition are highly valued. In other cultures, such as Sweden, business values are more attuned to modesty (lack of self-promotion) and taking care of society's underserved members. This range of difference is one aspect of intercultural communication that requires significant attention when the business communicator enters a new environment.

2.5.7 Direct versus Indirect

In Canada, business correspondence is expected to be short and to the point. “What can I do for you?” is a common question when a business person receives a call from a stranger; it is an accepted way of asking the caller to state his or her business. In some cultures it is quite appropriate to make direct personal observation, such as “You’ve changed your hairstyle,” while for others it may be observed, but never spoken of in polite company. In indirect cultures, such as those in Latin America, business conversations may start with discussions of the weather, or family, or topics other than business as the partners gain a sense of each other, long before the topic of business is raised. Again, the skilled business communicator researches the new environment before entering it, as a social faux pas, or error, can have a significant impact.

2.5.8 Materialism versus Relationships

Members of a materialistic culture place emphasis on external goods and services as a representation of self, power, and social rank. If you consider the plate of food before you, and consider the labour required to harvest the grain, butcher the animal, and cook the meal, you are focusing more on the relationships involved with its production than the foods themselves. Caviar may be a luxury, and it may communicate your ability to acquire and offer a delicacy, but it also represents an effort. Cultures differ in how they view material objects and their relationship to them, and some value people and relationships more than the objects themselves. The United States and Japan are often noted as materialistic cultures, while many Scandinavian nations feature cultures that place more emphasis on relationships.

2.5.9 Low-Power versus High-Power Distance

In low-power distance cultures, according to Hofstede (2009), people relate to one another more as equals and less as a reflection of dominant or subordinate roles, regardless of their actual formal roles as employee and manager, for example. In a high-power distance culture, you would probably be much less likely to chal- lenge the decision, to provide an alternative, or to give input. If you are working with people from a high- power distance culture, you may need to take extra care to elicit feedback and involve them in the discussion because their cultural framework may preclude their participation. They may have learned that less powerful people must accept decisions without comment, even if they have a concern or know there is a significant problem. Unless you are sensitive to cultural orientation and power distance, you may lose valuable information.

2.6 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

In this section, we'll examine intercultural communication from the standpoint of international communication. International communication can be defined as communication between nations, but we recognize that nations do not exist independent of people. International communication is typically government to government or, more accurately, governmental representatives to governmental representatives. It often involves topics and issues that relate to the nations as entities, broad issues of trade, and conflict resolution. People use political, legal, and economic systems to guide and regulate behaviour, and diverse cultural view- points necessarily give rise to many variations. Ethical systems also guide behaviour, but often in less formal, institutional ways. Together these areas form much of the basis of international communication, and war- rant closer examination as seen in Figure 10.1 below.

2.6.1 Political Systems

You may be familiar with democracy, or rule by the people; and theocracy, or rule of God by his or her designates; but the world presents a diverse range of how people are governed. It is also important to note, as we examine political systems, that they are created, maintained, and changed by people. Just as people change over time, so do all systems that humans create. A political climate that was once closed to market forces, including direct and indirect investment, may change over time.

Political systems are often framed in terms of how people are governed, and the extent to which they may participate. Democracy is one form of government that promotes the involvement of the individual, but even here we can observe stark differences. In Canada, people are encouraged to vote, but it is not mandatory. When voter turn out is low, voting minorities might have greater influence on the larger political systems. In Chile, voting is mandatory, so that all individuals are expected to participate, with adverse consequences if they do not. This doesn't mean there are not still voting minorities or groups with disproportionate levels of influence and power, but it does underscore cultural values and their many representations.

Centralized rule of the people also comes in many forms. In a dictatorship, the dictator establishes and enforces the rules with few checks and balances, if any. In a totalitarian system, one party makes the rules. The Communist states of the twentieth century (although egalitarian in theory) were ruled in practice by a small central committee. In a theocracy, one religion makes the rules based on their primary documents or interpretation of them, and religious leaders hold positions of political power. In each case, political power is centralized to a small group over the many.

A third type of political system is anarchy, in which there is no government. A few places in the world, notably Somalia, may be said to exist in a state of anarchy. But even in a state of anarchy, the lack of a central government means that local warlords, elders, and others exercise a certain amount of political, military, and economic power. The lack of an established governing system itself creates the need for informal power structures that regulate behaviour and conduct, set and promote ideals, and engage in commerce and trade, even if that engagement involves nonstandard strategies such as the appropriation of ships via piracy. In the absence of appointed or elected leaders, emergent leaders will rise as people attempt to meet their basic needs.

2.6.2 Legal Systems

Legal systems also vary across the planet and come in many forms. Some legal systems promote the rule of law while others promote the rule of culture, including customs, traditions, and religions. The two most common systems are civil and common law. In civil law the rules are spelled out in detail, and judges are responsible for applying the law to the given case. In common law, the judge interprets the law and considers the concept of precedent, or previous decisions. Common law naturally adapts to changes in technology and modern contexts as precedents accumulate, while civil law requires new rules to be written out to reflect the new context even as the context transforms and changes. Civil law is more predictable and is practised in the majority of countries, while common law involves more interpretation that can produce conflict with multiple views on the application of the law in question. The third type of law draws its rules from a theological base rooted in religion. This system presents unique challenges to the outsider, and warrants thorough research.

2.6.3 Economic Systems

Economic systems vary in similar ways across cultures, and again reflect the norms and customs of people. Economies are often described on the relationship between people and their government. An economy with a high degree of government intervention may prove challenging for both internal and external businesses. An economy with relatively little government oversight may be said to reflect more of the market(s) and to be less restricted. Along these same lines, government may perceive its role as a representative of the common good, to protect individual consumers, and to prevent fraud and exploitation.

This continuum or range, from high to low degrees of government involvement, reflects the concept of government itself. A government may be designed to give everyone access to the market, with little supervision, in the hope that people will regulate transactions based on their own needs, wants, and desires; in essence, their own self-interest. If everyone operates in one's self-interest and word gets out that one business produces a product that fails to work as advertised, it is often believed that the market will naturally gravitate away from this faulty product to a competing product that works properly. Individual consumers, however, may have a hard time knowing which product to have faith in and may look to government to provide that measure of safety.

Government certification of food, for example, attempts to reduce disease. Meat from unknown sources would lack the seal of certification, alerting the consumer to evaluate the product closely or choose another product. From meat to financial products, we can see both the dangers and positive attributes of intervention and can also acknowledge that its application may be less than consistent. Some cultures that value the community may naturally look to their government for leadership in economic areas, while those that rep- resent an individualistic tendency may take a more “hands off” approach.

2.6.4 Ethical Systems

Ethical systems, unlike political, legal, and economic systems, are generally not formally institutionalized. This does not imply, however, that they are less influential in interactions, trade, and commerce. Ethics refers to a set of norms and principles that relate to individual and group behaviour, including businesses and organizations. They may be explicit, in the form of an organization’s code of conduct; or may reflect cultural values in law. What is legal and what is ethical are at times quite distinct.

Some cultures have systems of respect and honor that require tribute and compensation for service, while others may view payment as a form of bribe. It may be legal in one country to make a donation or support a public official in order to gain influence over a decision, but it may be unethical. In some countries, it may be both illegal and unethical. Given the complexity of human values and their expression across behaviours, it is wise to research the legal and ethi- cal norms of the place or community where you want to do business.

2.6.5 Global Village

International trade has advantages and disadvantages, again based on your viewpoint and cultural reference. If you come from a traditional culture, with strong gender norms and codes of conduct, you may not appreciate the importation of some Western television programs that promote what you consider to be content that contradicts your cultural values. You may also take the viewpoint from a basic perspective and assert that basic goods and services that can only be obtained through trade pose a security risk. If you cannot obtain the product or service, it may put you, your business, or your community at risk.

Furthermore, “just in time” delivery methods may produce shortages when the systems break down due to weather, transportation delays, or conflict. People come to know each other through interactions (and transactions are fundamental to global trade), but cultural viewpoints may come into conflict. Some cultures may want a traditional framework to continue and will promote their traditional cultural values and norms at the expense of innovation and trade. Other cultures may come to embrace diverse cultures and trade, only to find that they have welcomed some who wish to do harm. In a modern world, transactions have a cultural dynamic that cannot be ignored.

Intercultural communication and business have been related since the first exchange of value. People, even from the same community, had to arrive at a common understanding of value. Symbols, gestures, and even language reflect these values. Attention to this central concept will enable the skilled business communicator to look beyond their own viewpoint.

It was once the privilege of the wealthy to travel, and the merchant or explorer knew firsthand what many could only read about. Now we can take virtual tours of locations we may never travel to, and as the cost of travel decreases, we can increasingly see the world for ourselves. As global trade has developed, and time to market has decreased, the world has effectively grown smaller. While the size has not changed, our ability to navigate has been dramatically decreased. Time and distance are no longer the obstacles they once were.

The Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan, a pioneer in the field of communication, predicted what we now know as the “global village.” The global village is characterized by information and transportation technologies that reduce the time and space required to interact (McLuhan, M., 1964).

2.7 STYLES OF MANAGEMENT

People and their relationships to dominant and subordinate roles are a reflection of culture and cultural viewpoint. They are communicated through experience and create expectations for how and when man- agers interact with employees. The three most commonly discussed management theories are often called X, Y, and Z. As seen in Figure 10.2 below, the three theories and their influence on intercultural communication will be described.

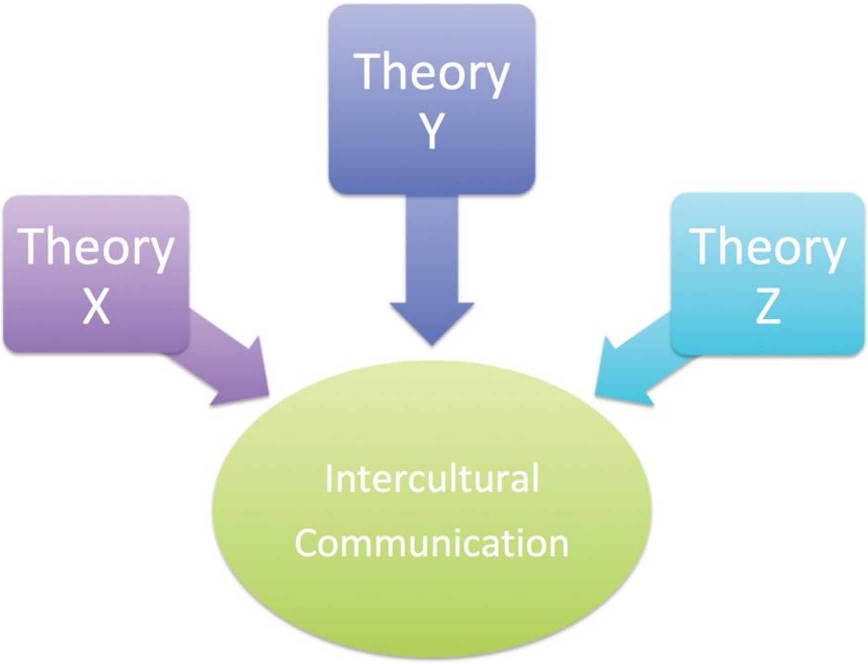


Figure 10.2 Intercultural communication and theories X, Y, and Z.

2.7.1 Theory X

In an influential book titled The Human Side of Enterprise, M. I. T. management professor Douglas McGregor described two contrasting perceptions on how and why people work, formulating Theory X and Theory Y; they are both based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, A., 1954; Maslow, A., 1970). According to this model, people are concerned first with physical needs (e.g., food, shelter) and second with safety. At the third level, people seek love, acceptance, and intimacy. Self-esteem, achievement, and respect are the fourth level. Finally, the fifth level embodies self-actualization.

Theory X asserts that workers are motivated by their basic (low-level) needs and have a general disposition against labour. In this viewpoint, workers are considered lazy and predicted to avoid work if they can, giving rise to the perceived need for constant, direct supervision.

A Theory X manager may be described as authoritarian or autocratic, and does not seek input or feedback from employees. He or she may use control and incentive programs to provide punishment and reward.

In **Theory Y** employees are described as ambitious, self-directed, and capable of self-motivation.

A Theory Y manager determines that a job well done is reward in and of itself, and the employee may be a valuable source of feedback. Collaboration is viewed as normal, and the worker may need little supervision.

Theory Z takes the view that workers are seen as having a high need for reinforcement, where belonging is emphasized.

In Theory Z management, workers are trusted to do their jobs with excellence and supervisors are trusted to support them (Massie & Douglas, 1992).

Each of these theories of management features a viewpoint with assumptions about people and why they do what they do. While each has been the subject of debate, and variations on each have been introduced across organizational communication and business, they serve as a foundation for understanding manage- ment in an intercultural context.

Management Theories X, Y, and Z are examples of distinct and divergent views on worker motivation, need for supervision, and the possibility of collaboration.

2.8 LET US SUM UP

An intercultural communication is an aspect of all communicative interactions, and attention to your perspective is key to your effectiveness. Ethnocentrism is a major obstacle to intercultural communication. An ethnocentric tendencies, stereotyping, and assumptions of similarity can make it difficult to learn about cultural differences. All cultures have characteristics such as initiations, traditions, history, values and principles, purpose, symbols, and boundaries. The cultures have distinct orientations when it comes to rules, uncertainty, time and time horizon, masculinity, directness, materialism, and power distance. After learning more about cultural differences in business contexts, what advice do you have for Abe, where her country of origin culture and customs are different from the new Canadian customs she encounters? Should she assimilate and just shake hands with male colleagues? If it's important for her to maintain some of her customs, how might she communicate about that with her new colleagues?

2.9 FURTHER READING

- Global Affairs Canada, Cultural Information: Answers to your intercultural questions from a Canadian and a local point of view https://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/country_insights-apercus_pays/ci-ic_ca.aspx?lang=eng
- Cultures at Work: Intercultural Communication in the Canadian Workplace by Ana Maria Fantino
- (2006) http://volunteeralberta.ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Cultures-at-Work-Ana-Maria-Fan- tino-2006.pdf
- Conestoga College: Welcome to Intercultural Communication https://www.conestogac.on.ca/intercultural- communication/

2.10 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Define Culture
2. Define intercultural communication
3. Discuss the effects of ethnocentrism.
4. List several examples of common cultural characteristics.
5. Describe international communication and the global marketplace
6. Give examples of various styles of management, including Theory X, Y, and Z.

Unit 3: GROUP COMMUNICATION, TEAMWORK, AND LEADERSHIP

3

Unit Structure

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

After studying this unit student should be able to:

- What Is a Group?
- Group Life Cycles and Member Roles
- Group Problem Solving
- Business and Professional Meetings

3.2 INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal communication occurs between two people, but group communication may involve two or more individuals. Groups are a primary context for interaction within the business community. Groups overlap and may share common goals, but they may also engage in conflict. Within a group, individuals may behave in distinct ways, use unique or specialized terms, or display symbols that have meaning to that group. Those same terms or symbols may be confusing, meaningless, or even unacceptable to another group. An individual may belong to multiple groups, adapting their communication patterns to meet group normative expectations.

3.3 WHAT IS A GROUP?

Most humans form self-identities through their communication with others, and much of that interaction occurs in a group context. A group may be defined as three or more individuals who affiliate, interact, or cooperate in a familial, social, or work context. Group communication may be defined as the exchange of information with those who are alike culturally, linguistically, and/or geographically. Group members may be known by their symbols, such as patches and insignia on a military uniform. They may be known by their use of specialized language or jargon. Group members may also be known by their proximity, as in gated communities. Regardless of how the group defines itself, and regardless of the extent to which its borders are porous or permeable, a group recognizes itself as a group. Humans naturally make groups a part of their context or environment.

3.3.1 Types of Groups in the Workplace

As a skilled business communicator, learning more about groups, group dynamics, management, and leadership will serve you well. Mergers, forced sales, downsizing, and entering new markets all call upon individuals within a business or organization to become members of groups. Groups may be defined by function.

They can also be defined, from a developmental viewpoint, by relationships within the group. Groups can be discussed in terms of their relationship to the individual and the degree to which they meet interpersonal needs. Some groups may be assembled at work to solve problems, and once the challenge has been resolved, they may dissolve into previous or yet to be determined groups. These temporary problem-solving groups are called functional groups and may be familiar to you.

In an academic or professional context, to be a member of a discipline is to adhere to a similar framework to for viewing the world. Disciplines involve a common set of theories that explain the world, terms to explain those theories, and have an applied purpose related to increasing knowledge. In business, you may have col- leagues that are marketing experts that are members of the marketing department and perceive their tasks differently from a member of the sales staff or someone in accounting. You may work in the mailroom, and the mailroom staff is a group in itself, both distinct from and interconnected with the larger organization.

Relationships are part of any group, and can be described in terms of status, power, control, as well as role, function, or viewpoint. Relationships are formed through communication interaction across time, and often share a common history, values, and beliefs about the world around us.

Through conversations and a shared sense that you and your coworkers belong together, you meet many of your basic human needs, such as the need to feel included, the need for affection, and the need for control (Schutz, 1966). In a work context, “affection” may sound odd, but we all experience affection at work in the form of friendly comments like “good morning,” “have a nice weekend,” and “good job!” Our professional lives also fulfill more than just our basic needs (i.e., air, food, and water, as well as safety). While your work group may be gathered together with common goals, such as to deliver the mail in a timely fashion to the corresponding departments and individuals, your daily interactions may well go beyond this functional perspective.

3.3.2 Primary and Secondary Groups

There are fundamentally two types of groups, primary and secondary. The hierarchy denotes the degree to which the group(s) meet your interpersonal needs. Primary groups meet most, if not all, of one’s needs.

Groups that meet some, but not all, needs are called secondary groups. Secondary groups often include work groups, where the goal is to complete a task or solve a problem. Secondary groups may meet your need for professional acceptance and celebrate your success, but they may not meet your need for under- standing and sharing on a personal level.

In terms of problem solving, work groups can accomplish more than individuals can. People, each of whom have specialized skills, talents, experience, or education come together in new combinations with new chal- lenges, find new perspectives to create unique approaches that they themselves would not have formulated alone.

3.3.3 If Two’s Company and Three’s a Crowd, What Is a Group?

This old cliché refers to the human tendency to form pairs. Pairing is the most basic form of relationship formation; it applies to childhood best friends, college roommates, romantic couples, business partners, and many other dyads (two-person relationships). A group, by definition, includes at least three people. We can categorize groups in terms of their size and complexity.

The larger the group grows, the more likely it is to subdivide. Analysis of these smaller, or microgroups, is increasingly a point of study as the Internet allows individuals to join people of similar mind or habit to share virtually anything across time and distance. A microgroup is a small, independent group that has a link, affiliation, or association with a larger group. With each additional group member the number of possible interactions increases (Harris & Sherblom, 1999; McLean,, 2003).

Small groups normally contain between three and eight people. One person may involve intrapersonal communication, while two may constitute interpersonal communication, and both may be present within a group communication context.

Group norms are customs, standards, and behavioural expectations that emerge as a group forms. If you post an update every day on your Facebook page and your friends stop by to post on your wall and comment, not posting for a week will violate a group norm. They will wonder if you are sick or in the hospital where you have no access to a computer to keep them updated. If, however, you only post once a week, the group will come to naturally expect your customary post. Norms involve expectations that are self and group imposed and that often arise as groups form and develop.

If there are more than eight members, it becomes a challenge to have equal participation, where everyone has a chance to speak, listen, and respond. Some will dominate, others will recede, and smaller groups will form. Finding a natural balance within a group can also be a challenge. Small groups need to have enough members to generate a rich and stimulating exchange of ideas, information, and interaction, but not so many people that what each brings cannot be shared (Galanes, Adams, & Brilhart, 2000).

3.4 GROUP LIFE CYCLES AND MEMBER ROLES

Groups are dynamic systems in constant change. Groups grow together and eventually come apart. People join groups and others leave. This dynamic changes and transforms the very nature of the group. Those who are in leadership positions may ascend or descend the leadership hierarchy as the needs of the group, and other circumstances, change over time.

Group socialization involves how the group members interact with one another and form relationships.

3.4.1 Group Life Cycle Patterns

In order to better understand group development and its life cycle, many researchers have described the universal stages and phases of groups. While there are modern interpretations of these stages, most draw from the model proposed by Bruce Tuckman (1965). This model, shown in Figure 11.1, specifies the usual order of the phases of group development as a cycle, and allows us to predict several stages we can anticipate as we join a new group.

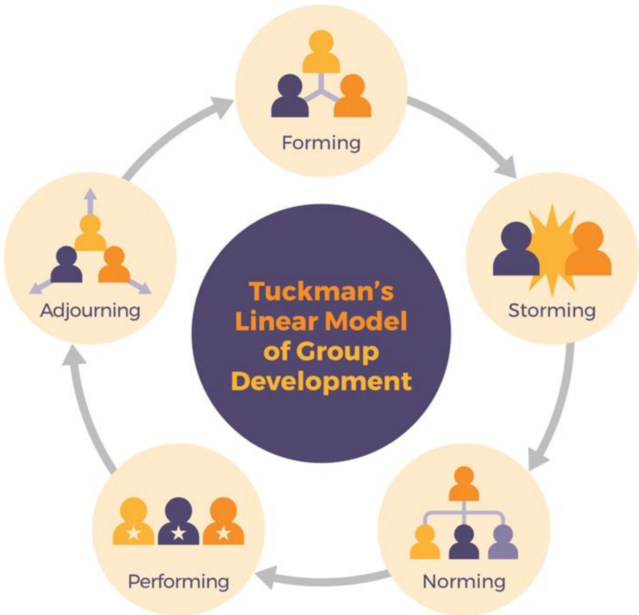


Figure 11.1 Tuckman's Linear Model of group development.

Tuckman (1965) describes the five stages as follows:

- **Forming:** Members come together, learn about each other, and determine the purpose of the group.
- **Storming:** Members engage in more direct communication and get to know each other. Conflicts between group members will often arise during this stage.
- **Norming:** Members establish spoken or unspoken rules about how they communicate and work. Status, rank, and roles in the group are established.
- **Performing:** Members fulfill their purpose and reach their goal.
- **Adjourning:** Members leave the group

Tuckman begins with the **forming stage** as the initiation of group formation. This stage is also called the **orientation stage** because individual group members come to know each other. Group members, who are new to each other and can't predict each other's behaviour, can be expected to experience the stress of uncertainty. Uncertainty theory states that humans choose to know more about others with whom they have interactions in order to reduce or resolve the anxiety associated with the unknown (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger, 1986; Gudykunst, 1995). The more we know about others and become accustomed to how they communicate, the better we can predict how they will interact with us in future contexts. If you learn that Monday mornings are never a good time for your supervisor, you quickly learn to schedule meetings later in the week.

If you don't know someone very well, it is easy to offend. Each group member brings to the group a set of experiences, combined with education and a self-concept. You won't be able to read this information on a nametag, but instead you will only come to know it through time and interaction. Since the possibility of overlapping and competing viewpoints and perspectives exists, the group will experience a storming stage, a time of struggles as the members themselves sort out their differences. There may be more than one way to solve the problem or task at hand, and some group members may prefer one strategy over another. Some members of the group may be more senior to the organization, and members may treat them differently.

Some group members may be at a similar level to you but may be uncertain about everyone's talents, skills, roles, and self-perceptions. The wise business communicator will anticipate the storming stage and help facilitate opportunities for the members to resolve uncertainty before the group's work commences. There may be challenges for leadership, and conflicting viewpoints. A clear definition of the purpose and mission of the group can help the members focus their energies. Interaction prior to the first meeting can help reduce uncertainty.

The norming stage is where the group establishes norms, or informal rules, for behaviour and interaction. Who speaks first? Who takes notes? Who is creative, who is visual, and who is detail-oriented? Sometimes job titles and functions speak for themselves, but human beings are complex. We are not simply a list of job functions, and in the dynamic marketplace of today's business environment you will often find that people have talents and skills well beyond their "official" role or task. Drawing on these strengths can make the group more effective.

The **norming stage** is marked by less division and more collaboration. The level of anxiety associated with interaction is generally reduced, making for a more positive work climate that promotes listening. When people feel less threatened and their needs are met, they are more likely to focus their complete attention on the purpose of the group. Tensions are reduced when the normative expectations are known, and the degree to which a manager can describe these at the outset can reduce the amount of time the group remains in uncertainty. Group members generally express more satisfaction with clear expectations and are more inclined to participate.

Ultimately, the purpose of a work group is performance, and the preceding stages lead to the **performing stage**, in which the group accomplishes its mandate, fulfills its purpose, and reaches its goals. To facilitate performance, group members can't skip the initiation of getting to know each other or the sorting out of roles and norms, but they can try to focus on performance with clear expectations from the moment the group is formed. Productivity is often how we measure success in business and industry, and the group has to produce. Outcome assessments may have been built into the system from the beginning to serve as a benchmark for success. If the goal is to create a community where competition pushes each member to perform, individual highlights may serve your needs, but if you want a group to solve a problem or address a challenge, you have to promote group cohesion.

In the **adjourning stage**, members leave the group. The group may cease to exist or it may be transformed with new members and a new set of goals. Like life, the group process is normal, and mixed emotions are to be expected. A wise manager anticipates this stage and facilitates the separation with skill and ease. We often close this process with a ritual marking its passing. The ritual may be as formal as an award or as informal as a “thank you” or a verbal acknowledgement of a job well done. It is important not to forget that groups can reach the adjourning stage without having achieved success. Some businesses go bankrupt, some departments are closed, and some individuals lose their positions after a group fails to perform.

Adjournment can come suddenly and unexpectedly, or gradually and piece by piece. Either way, a skilled business communicator will be prepared and recognize it as part of the classic group life cycle.

3.4.2 Life Cycle of Member Roles

Just as groups go through a life cycle when they form and eventually adjourn, so the group members fulfil different roles during this life cycle. These roles, proposed by Richard Moreland and John Levine (1982), are summarized in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 Life Cycle of Member Roles

Potential Member	Curiosity and interest
New Member	Joined the group but still an outsider and unknown
Full Member	Knows the “rules” and is looked to for leadership
Divergent Member	Focuses on differences
Marginal Member	No longer involved
Ex-Member	No longer considered a member

Using Abe as an example, the following is a group member life cycle description:

Stage 1: Abe graduated from her MBA program and is working as a financial analyst. She has decided that she would like to know more about the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation. She has contacted the CFA Institute and reached out to members in her company to discuss what the process is like to become a CFA.

At this stage, Abe is a potential member. She is not a member of the institute yet.

Stage 2: Abe reviews the requirements on becoming a CFA member, and registers as a CFA candidate. She writes the exams and is currently completing her work experience portion of the requirements. She is not yet a full member, but is enrolled in the institute while she completes her work experience. She attends events with her local CFA society to network, and learn. She finds it overwhelming as she is unfamiliar with the rules, information, and members of the society.

As a new group member, your level of acceptance will increase as you begin learning the groups' rules, spoken and unspoken (Fisher, 1970). You will gradually move from the potential member role to the role of new group member as you learn to fit into the group.

Stage 3: Over time Abe completes her work experience requirements, and becomes a full member. As she completes projects, and works with others she learns more about the profession and membership responsibilities, she is no longer considered a "newbie". Full members enjoy knowing the rules and customs, and can even create new rules. New group members look to full members for leadership and guidance.

Stages 4 & 5: Abe sometimes disagrees with other CFA members at her organization or in her society on different approaches to projects. As there are many ways to approach a project, there are bound to be differences in perspectives. Expressing different views can cause conflict and may even interfere with communication. When this type of tension arises, divergent group members pull back, contribute less, and start to see themselves as separate from the group. Divergent group members have less eye contact, seek out each other's opinion less frequently, and listen defensively. In the beginning of the process, you felt a sense of belonging, but now you don't. Marginal group members start to look outside the group for their interpersonal needs.

Stage 6: Abe works alongside another CFA member named Sue who seems to always have a different perspective than Abe on how to create reports for management. Abe likes to use technology to make the job go faster, but Sue is uncomfortable with technology and would rather do it all by hand. After several years of working together, Sue has decided to retire from her job and from the CFA Institute to pursue other interests.

Some members at this stage can overcome differences and stay in the group for years; or move on to other groups. As a skilled business communicator, you will recognize the signs of divergence, just as you have anticipated the storming stage, and do your best to facilitate success.

3.4.3 Positive and Negative Member Roles

Source: pixabay.com

If someone in your group always makes everyone laugh, that can be a distinct asset when the news is less than positive. At times when you have to get work done, however, the class clown may become a distraction. Notions of positive and negative will often depend on the context when discussing groups. Table 11.2 “Positive Roles” and Table 11.3 “Negative Roles” list both positive and negative roles people sometimes play in a group setting (Beene & Sheets, 1948; McLean, 2005).

Table 11.2 Positive Roles.

Initiator-Coordinator	Suggests new ideas of new ways of looking at the problem
Elaborator	Builds on ideas and provides examples
Coordinator	Brings ideas, information, and suggestions together
Evaluator-Critic	Evaluates ideas and provides constructive criticism
Recorder	Records ideas, examples, suggestions, and critiques

Now that you’ve reviewed positive and negative group member roles, you may examine another perspective. While some personality traits and behaviours may negatively influence groups, some traits can be positive or negative depending on the context.

Just as the class clown can have a positive effect in lifting spirits or a negative effect in distracting members, a dominator may be exactly what is needed for quick action. An emergency physician doesn't have time to ask all the group members in the emergency unit how they feel about a course of action; instead, a self- directed approach based on training and experience may be necessary. In contrast, a teacher may ask students their opinions about a change in the format of class; in this situation, the role of coordinator or elaborator is more appropriate than that of dominator.

The group is together because they have a purpose or goal, and normally they are capable of more than any one individual member could be on their own, so it would be inefficient to hinder that progress. But a blocker, who cuts off collaboration, does just that. If a group member interrupts another and presents a viewpoint or information that suggests a different course of action, the point may be well taken and serve the collaborative process. But if that same group member repeatedly engages in blocking behaviour, then the behaviour becomes a problem. A skilled business communicator will learn to recognize the difference, even when positive and negative situations and roles aren't completely clear.

3.5 GROUP PROBLEM SOLVING

The problem-solving process involves thoughts, discussions, actions, and decisions that occur from the first consideration of a problematic situation to the goal. The problems that groups face are varied, but some common problems include budgeting funds, raising funds, planning events, addressing customer or citizen complaints, creating or adapting products or services to fit needs, supporting members, and raising aware- ness about issues or causes.

While there are many ways to approach a problem, the American educational philosopher John Dewey's reflective thinking sequence has stood the test of time. This seven-step process (Adler, 1996) has produced positive results and serves as a handy organizational structure. If you are member of a group that needs to solve a problem and don't know where to start, consider the seven simple steps illustrated in figure 11.2 below:

Figure 11.2. Problem solving process.

3.5.1 Define the Problem

If you don't know what the problem is, how do you know you can solve it? Defining the problem allows the group to set boundaries of what the problem is and what it is not and to begin to formalize a description or definition of the scope, size, or extent of the challenge the group will address. A problem that is too broadly defined can overwhelm the group. If the problem is too narrowly defined, important information will be missed or ignored.

In the following example, there is a web-based company called Favourites that needs to increase its customer base and ultimately sales. A problem-solving group has been formed, and they start by formulating a working definition of the problem.

Example problems:

Too broad: "Sales are off, our numbers are down, and we need more customers."

More precise: "Sales have been slipping incrementally for six of the past nine months and are significantly lower than a seasonally adjusted comparison to last year. Overall, this loss represents a 4.5% reduction in sales from the same time last year. However, when we break it down by product category, sales of our nonedible products have seen a modest but steady increase, while sales of edibles account for the drop off and we need to halt the decline."

3.5.2 Analyze the Problem

The problem-solving group Kevin, Mariah, and Suri analyse the problem and begin to gather information to learn more. The problem is complex and requires more than one area of expertise. Why do nonedible products continue selling well? What is it about the edibles that is turning customers off?

Kevin is responsible for customer resource management. He is involved with the customer from the point of initial contact through purchase and delivery. Most of the interface is automated in the form of an online “basket model,” where photographs and product descriptions are accompanied by “buy it” buttons. He is available during normal working business hours for live chat and voice chat if needed, and customers are invited to request additional information. Most Favourites customers do not access this service, but Kevin is kept quite busy, as he also handles returns and complaints. Because Kevin believes that superior service retains customers while attracting new ones, he is always interested in better ways to serve the customer.

Looking at edibles and nonedibles, he will study the cycle of customer service and see if there are any common points—from the main webpage, through the catalog, to the purchase process, and to returns—at which customers abandon the sale. He has existing customer feedback loops with end-of-sale surveys, but most customers decline to take the survey and there is currently no incentive to participate.

Mariah is responsible for products and purchasing. She wants to offer the best products at the lowest price, and to offer new products that are unusual, rare, or exotic. She regularly adds new products to the Favourites catalog and culls underperformers. Right now she has the data on every product and its sales history, but it is a challenge to represent it. She will analyze current sales data and produce a report that specifically identifies how each product—edible and nonedible—is performing. She wants to highlight “winners” and “losers” but also recognizes that today’s “losers” may be the hit of tomorrow. It is hard to predict constantly changing tastes and preferences, but that is part of her job. It’s not all science, and it’s not all art. She has to have an eye for what will catch on tomorrow while continuing to provide what is hot today.

Suri is responsible for data management at Favourites. She gathers, analyzes, and presents information gathered from the supply chain, sales, and marketing. She works with vendors to make sure products are available when needed, makes sales predictions based on past sales history, and assesses the effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

The problem-solving group members already have certain information on hand. They know that customer retention is one contributing factor. Attracting new customers is a constant goal, but they are aware of the well-known principle that it takes more effort to attract new customers than to keep existing ones. Thus, it is important to ensure a quality customer service experience for existing customers and encourage them to refer friends. The group needs to determine how to promote this favourable customer behaviour.

Another contributing factor seems to be that customers often abandon the shopping cart before completing a purchase, especially when purchasing edibles. The group members need to learn more about why this is happening.

3.5.3 Establish Criteria

Establishing the criteria for a solution is the next step. At this point, information is coming in from diverse perspectives, and each group member has contributed information from their perspective, even though there may be several points of overlap.

Kevin: Customers who complete the postsale survey indicate that they want to know (1) what is the estimated time of delivery, (2) why a specific item was not in stock and when it will be available, and (3) why their order sometimes arrives with less than a complete order, with some items back-ordered, without prior notification.

He notes that a very small percentage of customers complete the postsale survey, and the results are far from scientific. He also notes that it appears the interface is not capable of cross-checking inventory to provide immediate information concerning back orders, so that the customer “buys it” only to learn several days later that it was not in stock. This seems to be especially problematic for edible products, because people may tend to order them for special occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. But we don’t really know this for sure because of the low participation in the postsale survey.

Mariah: There are four edible products that frequently sell out. So far, we haven’t been able to boost the appeal of other edibles so that people would order them as a second choice when these sales leaders aren’t available. We also have several rare, exotic products that are slow movers. They have potential, but currently are underperformers.

Suri: We know from a postal code analysis that most of our customers are from a few specific geographic areas associated with above-average incomes. We have very few credit cards declined, and the average sale is over $100. Shipping costs represent on average 8 percent of the total sales cost. We do not have sufficient information to produce a customer profile. There is no specific point in the purchase process where basket abandonment tends to happen; it happens fairly uniformly at all steps.

3.5.4 Consider Possible Solutions to the Problem

The group has listened to each other and now starts to brainstorm ways to address the challenges they have addressed while focusing resources on those solutions that are more likely to produce results.

Kevin: Is it possible for our programmers to create a cross-index feature, linking the product desired with a report of how many are in stock? I’d like the customer to know right away whether it is in stock, or how long they may have to wait. As another idea, is it possible to add incentives to the purchase cycle that won’t negatively impact our overall profit? I’m thinking a small volume discount on multiple items, or perhaps free shipping over a specific dollar amount.

Mariah: I recommend we hold a focus group where customers can sample our edible products and tell us what they like best and why. When the best sellers are sold out, could we offer a discount on related products to provide an instant alternative? We might also cull the underperforming products with a liquidation sale to generate interest.

Suri: If we want to know more about our customers, we need to give them an incentive to complete the postsale survey. How about a 5 percent off coupon code for the next purchase to get them to return and to help us better identify our customer base? We may also want to build in a customer referral rewards program, but it all takes better data in to get results out. We should also explore the supply side of the business by getting a more reliable supply of the leading products and trying to get discounts that are more advantageous from our suppliers, especially in the edible category.

3.5.5 Decide on a Solution

Kevin, Mariah, and Suri may want to implement all the solution strategies, but they do not have the resources to do them all. They'll complete a cost-benefit analysis, which ranks each solution according to its probable impact.

3.5.6 Implement the Solution

Kevin is faced with the challenge of designing the computer interface without incurring unacceptable costs. He strongly believes that the interface will pay for itself within the first year—or, to put it more bluntly, that Favourites' declining sales will get worse if the website does not have this feature soon. He asks to meet with top management to get budget approval and secures their agreement, on one condition: he must negotiate a compensation schedule with the information technology consultants that includes delayed compensation in the form of bonuses after the feature has been up and running successfully for six months.

Mariah knows that searching for alternative products is a never-ending process, but it takes time and the company needs results. She decides to invest time evaluating products that competing companies currently offer, especially in the edible category, on the theory that customers who find their desired items sold out on the Favourites website may have been buying alternative products elsewhere instead of choosing an alternative from Favourites' product lines.

Suri decides to approach the vendors of the four frequently sold-out products and ask point blank, "What would it take to get you to produce these items more reliably in greater quantities?" By opening the channel of communication with these vendors, she is able to motivate them to make modifications that will improve the reliability and quantity. She also approaches the vendors of the less popular products with a request for better discounts in return for their cooperation in developing and test-marketing new products.

3.5.7 Follow Up on the Solution

Kevin: After several beta tests, the cross-index feature was implemented and has been in place for thirty days. Now customers see either "in stock" or "available [mo/da/yr]" in the shopping basket. As expected, Kevin notes a decrease in the number of chat and phone inquiries to the effect of, "Will this item arrive before my wife's birthday?" However, he notes an increase in inquiries asking, "Why isn't this item in stock?" It is difficult to tell whether customer satisfaction is higher overall.

Mariah: In exploring the merchandise available from competing merchants, she got several ideas for modifying Favourites' product line to offer more flavors and other variations on popular edibles. Working with vendors, she found that these modifications cost very little. Within the first thirty days of adding these items to the product line, sales are up. Mariah believes these additions also serve to enhance the Favourites brand identity, but she has no data to back this up.

Suri: So far, the vendors supplying the four top-selling edibles have fulfilled their promise of increasing quantity and reliability. However, three of the four items have still sold out, raising the question of whether Favourites needs to bring in one or more additional vendors to produce these items. Of the vendors with which Favourites asked to negotiate better discounts, some refused, and two of these were "stolen" by a competing merchant so that they no longer sell to Favourites. In addition, one of the vendors that agreed to give a better discount was unexpectedly forced to cease operations for several weeks because of a fire.

This scenario allows us to see that the problem may have several dimensions as well as solutions, that resources can be limited, and not every solution is successful. Even though the problem is not immediately resolved, the group problem-solving pattern and communication among the group members serves as a useful guide through the problem-solving process.

3.6 TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP

Two important aspects of group communication—especially in the business environment—are teamwork and leadership. You will work in a team and at some point may be called on to lead. You may emerge to that role as the group recognizes your specific skill set in relation to the task, or you may be appointed to a position of responsibility for yourself and others. Your communication skills will be your foundation for success as a member and as a leader. Listen and seek to understand both the task and your group members as you become involved with the new effort. Have confidence in yourself and inspire the trust of others. Know that leading and following are both integral aspects of effective teamwork.

3.6.1 Teamwork

Teams are a form of a group normally dedicated to production or problem-solving. Teams can often achieve higher levels of performance than individuals because of the combined energies and talents of the members. Collaboration can produce motivation and creativity that may not be present in single-contractor projects. Individuals also have a sense of belonging to the group, and the range of views and diversity can energize the process, helping address creative blocks and stalemates. By involving members of the team in decision making, and calling upon each member's area of contribution, teams can produce positive results.

Source: Pixabay.com

Teamwork is not without its challenges. The work itself may prove a challenge as members juggle competing assignments and personal commitments. The work may also be compromised if team members are expected to conform and pressured to go along with a procedure, plan, or product that they themselves have not developed. Groupthink, or the tendency to accept the group's ideas and actions in spite of individual concerns, can also compromise the process and reduce efficiency. Personalities and competition can play a role in a team's failure to produce.

We can recognize that people want to belong to a successful team, and celebrating incremental gain can focus the attention on the project and its goals. Members will be more willing to express thoughts and opinions, and follow through with actions, when they perceive that they are an important part of the team. By failing to include all the team members, valuable insights may be lost in the rush to judgment or production. Making time for planning, and giving each member time to study, reflect, and contribute can allow them to gain valuable insights from each other, and may make them more likely to contribute information that challenges the status quo. Unconventional or "devil's advocate" thinking may prove insightful and serve to challenge the process in a positive way, improving the production of the team. Respect for divergent views can encourage open discussion.

John Thill and Courtland Bovee (2002) provide a valuable list to consider when setting up a team as follows:

- Select team members wisely
- Select a responsible leader
- Promote cooperation
- Clarify goals
- Elicit commitment
- Clarify responsibilities
- Instill prompt action
- Apply technology
- Ensure technological compatibility
- Provide prompt feedback

Group dynamics involve the interactions and processes of a team and influence the degree to which mem- bers feel a part of the goal and mission. A team with a strong identity can prove to be a powerful force, but it requires time and commitment. A team that exerts too much control over individual members can run the risk of reducing creative interactions and encourage tunnel vision. A team that exerts too little control, with attention to process and areas of specific responsibility, may not be productive. The balance between motivation and encouragement, and control and influence, is challenging as team members represent diverse viewpoints and approaches to the problem. A skilled business communicator creates a positive team by first selecting members based on their areas of skill and expertise, but attention to their style of communication is also warranted. Individuals that typically work alone or tend to be introverted may need additional encouragement to participate. Extroverts may need to be encouraged to listen to others and not dominate the conversation.

3.6.2 Leadership

Leadership is one of the most studied aspects of group communication. Scholars in business, communication, psychology, and many other fields have written extensively about the qualities of leaders, theories of leadership, and how to build leadership skills. It's important to point out that although a group may have only one official leader, other group members play important leadership roles. Making this distinction also helps us differentiate between leaders and leadership (Hargie, 2011). The leader is a group role that is associated with a high-status position and may be formally or informally recognized by group members. Leadership is a complex of beliefs, communication patterns, and behaviours that influence the functioning of a group and move a group toward the completion of its task. A person in the role of leader may provide no or poor leadership. Likewise, a person who is not recognized as a "leader" in title can provide excellent leadership.

3.6.3 Leadership Styles

Given the large amount of research done on leadership, it is not surprising that there are several different ways to define or categorize leadership styles. In general, effective leaders do not fit solely into one style in any of the following classifications. Instead, they are able to adapt their leadership style to fit the relational and situational context (Wood, 1977).

One common way to study leadership style is to make a distinction among autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leaders (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). These leadership styles can be described as follows:

- Autocratic leaders set policies and make decisions primarily on their own, taking advantage of the power present in their title or status to set the agenda for the group.
- Democratic leaders facilitate group discussion and like to take input from all members before making a decision.
- Laissez-faire leaders take a “hands-off” approach, preferring to give group members freedom to reach and implement their own decisions.

Thomas Harris and John Sherblom (1999) specifically note three leadership styles that characterize the modern business or organization, and reflect our modern economy. We are not born leaders but may become them if the context or environment requires our skill set. A leader-as-technician role often occurs when we have skills that others do not. If you can fix the copy machine at the office, your leadership and ability to get it running again are prized and sought-after skills. You may instruct others on how to load the paper or how to change the toner, and even though your pay grade may not reflect this leadership role, you are looked to by the group as a leader within that context. Technical skills, from Internet technology to facilities maintenance, may experience moments where their particular area of knowledge is required to solve a problem. Their leadership will be in demand.

The leader-as-conductor involves a central role of bringing people together for a common goal. In the common analogy, a conductor leads an orchestra and integrates the specialized skills and sounds of the various components the musical group comprises. In the same way, a leader who conducts may set a vision, create benchmarks, and collaborate with a group as they interpret a set script. Whether it is a beautiful movement in music or a group of teams that comes together to address a common challenge, the leader-as-conductor keeps the time and tempo of the group.

Coaches are often discussed in business-related books as models of leadership for good reason. A leader-as-coach combines many of the talents and skills we’ve discussed here, serving as a teacher, motivator, and keeper of the goals of the group. A coach may be autocratic at times, give pointed direction without input from the group, and stand on the side lines while the players do what they’ve been trained to do and make the points. The coach may look out for the group and defend it against bad calls, and may motivate players with words of encouragement. Coaches are teachers, motivators, and keepers of the goals of the group.

Coaches serve to redirect the attention and energy of the individuals to the overall goals of the group. We can recognize some of the behaviors of coaches, but what specific traits have a positive influence on the group? Thomas Peters and Nancy Austin (1985) identify five important traits that produce results:

1. Orientation and education
2. Nurturing and encouragement
3. Assessment and correction
4. Listening and counselling
5. Establishing group emphasis

3.7 LET US SUM UP

Returning to Abe's story from the beginning of this chapter, as a leader on the technology side of her team's work, how might she share what she knows without overwhelming other team members? What type of leadership style would help Abe have a positive impact on her team's success implementing the new software required for Financial Analysts?

3.8 FURTHER READING

- National Research Council Canada. Management Competencies (including Teamwork and Communica- tion) https://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/careers/behavioural_competencies/management_teamwork.html
- Government of Canada: Teamwork and Cooperation https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/corpo- rate/careers-cra/information-moved/cra-competencies-standardized-assessment-tools/canada-rev- enue-agency-competencies-april-2016/teamwork-cooperation.html

3.9 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Define groups and teams.
2. Identify the typical stages in the life cycle of a group.
3. Describe types of group members and group member roles.
4. Describe teamwork and how to overcome challenges to group success.
5. Describe leadership styles and there likely influence on followers.

Unit 4: DIGITAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

4

Unit Structure

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to:

- Evolution of Digital Media
- Social Media
- Online Engagement
- Your Digital Footprint

4.2 INTRODUCTION

In the last 20 years, online and digital media has grown in leaps and bounds to become a fixture in the daily life of most people in Canada. Prior to the turn of the century, traditional media, which consisted of mainly print, radio, and television/movies, was limited to a few places and had a somewhat limited presence in lives and societies. For example, in the 20th century radio and television grew to become features in the home.

Movies were primarily enjoyed in theatres until VCRs and DVD players brought them into homes. The closest thing to a portable mass medium in the 20th century was reading a book or paper on a commute to and from work.

Digital media in the 21st century are more personal and more social than traditional media. A small device that fits in your pocket has the ability to connect you with the world, from anywhere and at any time. It has changed the way you communicate and in particular the way you approach communication in business. In this chapter, you will learn more about the evolution of digital media, consider how people engage with digital media, and how you can begin to use digital media as a business professional.

4.3 DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Digital media, as described in this chapter, couldn't exist without the move from analog to digital technology, as all the types of new media you will learn about are digitally based (Siapera, 2012). Digital media are composed of and/or are designed to read numerical codes (hence the root word 'digit'). The most commonly used system of numbers is binary code, which converts information into a series of 0s and

1s. This shared code system means that any machine that can decode (read) binary code can make sense of, store, and replay the information. Analog media are created by encoding information onto a physical object that must then be paired with another device capable of reading that specific code. In terms of physicality, ana- log media are a combination of mechanical and physical parts, while digital media can be completely electronic and have no physicality; think of an MP3 music file, for example. To make recordings using traditional media technology, grooves were carved into vinyl to make records or changes were made in the electromagnetic signature of ribbon or tape to make cassette tapes. Each of these physical objects must be paired with a specific device, such as a record player or a cassette deck, to be able to decode and listen to the music.

Digital media changed how most people collect and listen to music. Now music files are stored electronically and can be played on many different platforms, including tablets, computers, and smartphones. Many people who came of age in the digital revolution are now so used to having digital music that the notion of a physical music collection is completely foreign to them.

Analogue media like videocassette recorders (VCRs) are only compatible with specific media objects that have been physically encoded with information.

VCR Detail is in the public domain

In news coverage and academic scholarship, you will see several different terms used when discussing digi- tal media. Other terms used include new media, online media, social media, and personal media. In this chapter these items will be combined and referred to as digital media.

Digital media and technology are now changing faster than ever before. In short, what is new today may not be considered new in a week. Despite the rapid changes in technology, the multiplatform compatibility of much of digital media paradoxically allows for some stability.

Key to digital media is the notion of **technological convergence**. The on-going digitalization of traditional media allows them to circulate freely and be read/accessed/played by many digital media platforms with- out the need for conversion (Siapera, 2012). This multi-platform compatibility is relatively new. In the past, each type of media had a corresponding platform. For example, you couldn't play records in an eight-track cassette tape player or a VHS tape in a DVD player. In the past, the human eye was the encoding and decoding device needed to engage with analog forms of print media. In the present you can read this textbook in print, on a computer, or on an e-reader, tablet, smartphone, or other handheld device. Another characteristic of new media is the blurring of lines between producers and consumers, as individual users now have a more personal relationship with their media.

4.3.1 Social Media

Media and mass media have long been discussed as a unifying force. The shared experiences of the Russia- Canada hockey series in 1972, or following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were facilitated through media. Digital media, in particular, is characterized by its connectivity. In the past, a large audience was connected to the same radio or television broadcast, newspaper story, book, or movie via a one-way communication channel sent from one place to many. Today, digital media connects mass media outlets to people and allows people to connect back to them via the internet. Technology has allowed for mediated social interaction since the days of the telegraph, but these connections were not at the mass level they are today. Personalities such as Drake and Justin Bieber, and organizations like the Toronto Blue Jays or the CBC can reach millions of people with just one tweet. Social media doesn't just allow for connection; it allows us more control over the quality and degree of connection that we maintain with others (Siapera, 2012).

The most influential part of the new web is **social networking sites (SNSs),** which allow users to build a public or semi-public profile, create a network of connections to other people, and view other people's profiles and networks of connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Although SNSs have existed for over a decade, earlier iterations such as Friendster and MySpace have given way to the giant that is Facebook. Facebook, as of April 2018, has more than 2.23 billion users worldwide (Statista, 2018). More specific SNSs, like LinkedIn, focus on professional networking. The ability to self-publish information, likes/dislikes, status updates, profiles, and links allows people to craft their own life narrative and share it with other people. Likewise, users can follow the narratives of others in their network as they are constructed. The degree to which we engage with others' narratives varies based on the closeness of the relationship and situational factors, but SNSs are used to sustain strong, moderate, and weak ties with others (Richardson & Hessey, 2009).

Social media enable interactivity between individuals that share a social network and also allow people to broadcast or 'narrowcast' their activities and interests.

You might conceptualize social media in another way—through the idea of collaboration and sharing rather than just through interpersonal connection and interaction. The growth of open source publishing and Creative Commons licensing also presents a challenge to traditional media outlets and corporations and copy-rights. Open source publishing first appeared most notably with software programs. The idea was that the users could improve on openly available computer programs and codes and then the new versions, some- times called derivatives, would be made available again to the community. Crowdsourcing refers more to the idea stage of development where people from various perspectives and positions offer proposals or information to solve a problem or create something new (Brabham, 2008). This type of open access and free collaboration helps encourage participation and improve creativity through the synergy created by bringing together different perspectives and has been referred to as the biggest shift in innovation since the Indus- trial Revolution (Kaufman, 2008).

4.4 ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The key differentiating factor between traditional and digital media is the ability to interact, or engage with the communicator, and others in a community. Think back to the basic process of communication: the messenger (encoder) sends a message through a medium, which is received and decoded by an audience. In traditional media, the process was primarily one-way. In digital media, users have the ability to interact and respond to the message — in other words, they can ‘engage’ with the message and messenger.

But why are people drawn to digital communication? For the answers to this question, you might consider Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, which provides you with an understanding of the motivation that might be behind online engagement. Although engaging online doesn’t really satisfy physiological or safety needs, it certainly speaks to the other categories in the hierarchy as see in Figure 12.1 below:

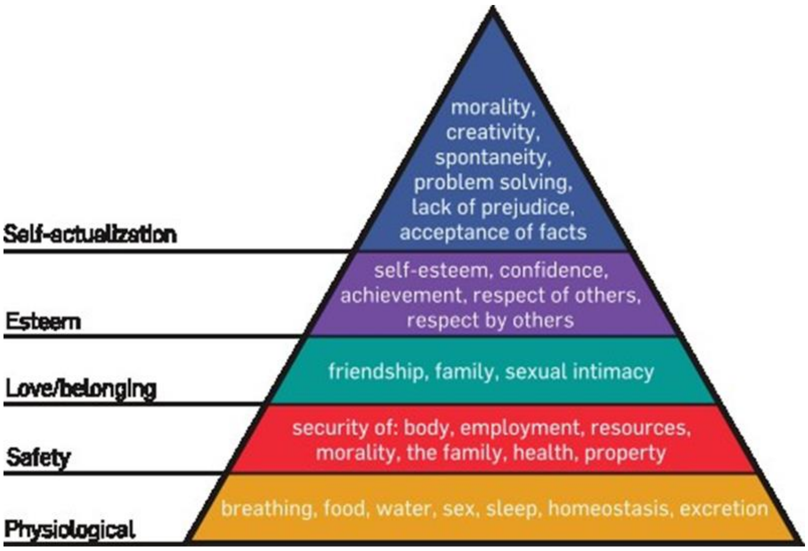
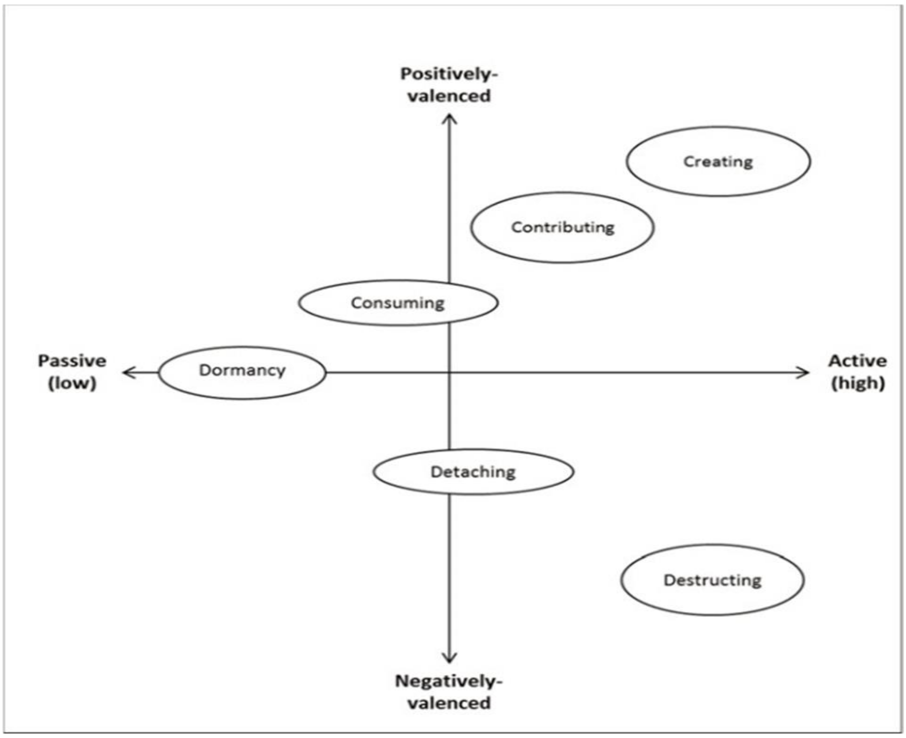


Figure 12.1. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Illustration by Factoryjoe is shared with a CC BY-SA 3.0 license Examples from social and digital media paradigms:

- Love and belongingness needs: engaging online can provide a tremendous feeling of being accepted. Online communities grow friendships, intimacy and a feeling of affiliation.
- Esteem needs: Engagement from friends, colleagues and even strangers can feed the desire to improve one's reputation or gain respect.
- Self-actualization needs: Digital media is full of examples of people who are working to realize their personal potential, "to become everything one is capable of becoming" (Maslow, 1987, p. 64).

4.4.1 Social Media Engagement Behaviour Typologies

New research is emerging to explore how and why users engage online, particularly in business. A study by Dolan, Conduit, Fahy and Goodman (2015) broke down customer (user) experiences with social media, based on intensity of activity (low/passive to high/active), and the valence, or emotional force, of the contributions (negative to positive). Figure 1 from the authors' work below provides a visual demonstration.



Social Media Engagement Behaviour Construct

Co-creation: this is the highest level on the matrix, in which users are earning, sharing, advocating, socializing and co-developing. They are actively collaborating and developing content and engaging with others.

Positive contribution: users are engaging with content and others, but not necessarily adding content. They may ‘like’ posts, repost, mark as a ‘favourite’ or post a positive comment.

Consumption: this is a passive form on engagement, where users are reading and watching, primarily using social media as a source of information.

Dormancy: these users may have previously been engaged online, but may occasionally be described as ‘lurkers’. They make no contributions nor do they engage online. They have passively disengaged.

Detachment: detached users have actively disengaged with a social media platform, person or brand. They will ‘unlike’ or adjust settings so they do not see information or content.

Negative Contribution: users will make negative active comments to try and influence others to change their feelings or opinions about a brand, subject, person or platform. Negative contributors are often seen posting comments on news articles that will contradict or slander the author (known as ‘trolls’).

Co-Destruction: users will create new negative content with the aim of diminishing the reputation, trust or value of a person/brand/platform. For example, videos or posts created to highlight negative attributes of a politician would be considered co-destructive.

You may notice your own behaviour patterns listed here — and noted that your behaviours change based on multiple factors. As a business professional, you will have to consider your own behaviour type(s), and how you might encourage others to actively and positively contribute to your own brand, organization or company.

4.5 Your Digital Footprint

It used to be that applying for a job was fairly simple: send in a resume, write a cover letter, and call a few references to make sure they will say positive things. However, there is a new step that is now a common part of this application process—hiding (or at least cleaning up) your virtual self, or your ‘digital footprint’.

The ubiquity of digital media allows anyone to easily start developing an online persona from as early as birth. Although this footprint may not accurately reflect the individual, it may be one of the first things a stranger sees. Those online photos may not look bad to friends and family, but your online digital footprint may be a hiring manager's first impression of you as a prospective employee. Someone in charge of hiring could search the internet for information on you even before calling references.

First impressions are an important thing to keep in mind when making an online persona professionally acceptable. Your presence online can be the equivalent of your first words to a brand-new acquaintance.

While it's possible to deactivate your social media accounts, once something is online, it's impossible to delete it completely. Photos, videos and posts will likely outlive you. As a business professional, you'll need to begin to carefully curate what you post online, and what has already been posted.

This doesn't mean you should delete everything: in fact, employers and clients want to see that you have interests and connections outside of work. However, be aware that their first impression of you may be digital – you'll want to put your best 'foot' forward!

5 Ways to Improve your Digital Footprint

- Google yourself. This is the best way to see what a potential employer or contact will see first, if they decide to do a search on you.
- Edit you own posts, including photos, video and multimedia. Content that involves drugs, alcohol, illegal activities, strong political views, or any other controversial activity should be removed.
- Ask friends and family who have posted controversial content to take it down.
- Set up professional accounts on one or more platforms, such as LinkedIn. This will increase the chances of employers/clients seeing your professional side first, and is an inexpensive way to build your professional network.
- Keep it positive with future posts and contributions. That will greatly reduce the chances that you will post something that could get you into trouble down the road.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

Digital media in the 21st century are more personal and more social than traditional media. A small device that fits in your pocket has the ability to connect you with the world, from anywhere and at any time. It has changed the way you communicate and in particular the way you approach communication in business. In this chapter, you will learn more about the evolution of digital media, consider how people engage with digital media, and how you can begin to use digital media as a business professional.

4.7 FURTHER READING

- Social Media Etiquette Rules for Business https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-etiquette-rules-for- business/
- The State of Digital Literacy in Canada (2017). The Brookfield Institute report http://brookfieldinstitute.ca/wp-ontent/uploads/2017/04/BrookfieldInstitute_State-of-Digital-Literacy-in-Canada_LiteratureRe- view.pdf

4.8 ASSIGNMENTS

1. Trace the evolution of online and digital media.
2. Discuss how digital and online media are more personal and social than traditional media.
3. Identify social media engagement behaviour types.
4. Explore ways to use digital communication as a business professional.

Block-4

Technical Writing Skills

1

Unit 1: TECHNICAL WRITING

Unit Structure

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to:

- Understand what technical writing is, why its important, and what it looks like
- Apply a “problem-solving” approach to communications tasks, starting by learning how to fully define the problem before looking for solutions
- Recognize the main conventions and characteristics of technical writing, and how they differ from other forms, such as academic and journalistic writing
- Understand the importance of defining the “rhetorical situation” in which you are communicating
- Apply what you have learned so far by examining
- Appreciate the complexity and iterative nature of a writing process in determining what writing process works best for you.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

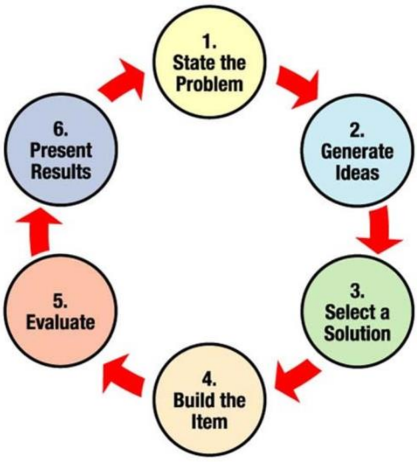
When you hear the term “technical communication,” what comes to mind? Perhaps you think of scientific reports, specifications, instructions, software documentation, or technical manuals. And you would be correct. However, technical communication is so much more than that. Technical Writing is a genre of non-fiction writing that encompasses not only technical materials such as manuals, instructions, specifications, and software documentation, but it also includes writing produced in day-to-day business operations such as correspondence, proposals, internal communications, media releases, and many kinds of reports. It includes the communication of specialized technical information, whether relating to computers and scientific instruments, or the intricacies of meditation. And because oral and visual presentations are such an important part of professional life, technical communication also encompasses these as well.

1.3 PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS TASKS

In the workplace, many of the communications tasks you perform are designed to solve a problem or improve a situation. Whether you are doing work for a client, for your employer, with your team, or for someone else, you will typically use some sort of design process to tackle and solve the problem. A clearly-articulated design process provides you with a clear, step-by-step plan for finding the best solution for your situation.

Take a moment to search the Internet for the term “design process” and look at “images.” You will find many variations. Have a look at several of them and see if you can find a common pattern.

One commonality you will likely find in examining other people’s design process diagrams is this: the first step in designing any solution is to clearly define the problem. Figure 1.1.1 shows NASA’s basic design process. Think about the kind of communication that each step of this process might entail.



You cannot begin to work on solutions until you have a clear definition of the problem and goals you want to achieve. This critical first stage of the design process requires that you effectively communicate with the “client” or whoever has the “problem” that needs solving. Poor communication at this stage can derail a project from the start.

For our purposes, we will use Barry Hyman’s Problem Formulation model to clearly define a problem. Hyman’s Problem Formulation model consists of 4 elements:

1. Need Statement: recognizes and describes the need for a solution or improvement to an “unsatisfactory situation.” It answers the questions, “what is wrong with the way things are currently? What is unsatisfactory about it? What negative effects does this situation cause?” You may need to do research and supply data to quantify the negative effects.
2. Goal Statement: describes what the improved situation would look like once a solution has been implemented. The goal statement defines the scope of your search for a solution. At this point, do not describe your solution, only the goal that any proposed solution should achieve. The broader you make your goal, the more numerous and varied the solution can be; a narrowly focused goal limits the number and variety of possible solutions.
3. Objectives: define measurable, specific outcomes that any feasible solution should optimize (aspects you can use to “grade” the effectiveness of the

solution). Objectives provide you with ways to quantifiably measure how well any solution will solve the problem; ideally, they will allow you to compare multiple solutions and figure out which one is most effective (which one gets the highest score on meeting the objectives?).

4. Constraints: define the limits that any feasible solution must adhere to in order to be acceptable (pass/fail conditions, range limits, etc.). The key word here is must — constraints are the "go/no go" conditions that determine whether a solution is acceptable or not. These often include budget and time limits, as well as legal, safety and regulatory requirements.

1.4 COMMUNICATION AS SOLUTION

This model can apply to a communications task as well as more physical design tasks. Imagine your communications task as something that will solve a problem or improve a situation. Before you begin drafting this document or presentation, define the problem you want to solve with this document:

- **Understand the Need:** consider what gave rise to the need to communicate. Does someone lack sufficient information to make a decision or take a position on an issue? Did someone request information? Is there some unsatisfactory situation that needs to be remedied by communicating with your audience? What specifically is unsatisfactory about it? Consider your audience. For example
  - *A potential client lacks sufficient information on whether the solution I have proposed to solve the client's problem will be feasible, affordable, and effective.*
  - *My instructor lacks sufficient examples of my written work to assign a grade for how well I met the course learning objectives.*
- **Establish a Goal:** consider your purpose in writing. What do you want your reader to do, think, or know? Do you want your reader to make a decision? Change their opinion or behaviour? Follow a course of action? What is your desired outcome? And what form and style of communication will best lead to that outcome? For example
  - *Provide the client with enough information, in an effective and readable format, to make a decision (ideally, to hire you to build the solution for the problem).*
  - *Provide my instructor with samples of my writing that demonstrate my achievement of the course learning objectives (provide relevant and complete*

information in a professionally appropriate format, using evidence-based argument; earn an A+ grade on the assignment.)

- **Define Objectives:** consider the specifics of your message and your audience to determine what criteria you should meet. What form should it take? What content elements will you need to include? What kind of research will be required? What information does your audience want/need? What do they already know?
  - *Review the client's RFP to see what specific objectives it lists.*
  - *Review the Technical Report Grading Rubric to determine specific requirements and objectives that will be graded by your instructor.*
- **Identify Constraints:** what are the pass/fail conditions of this document? Consider your rhetorical situation. What conditions exist that present barriers or challenges to communication? How can you address them? For example, how much time is your audience willing to spend on this? What format and style do they require? How long can you make your document or presentation? How much time do you have to create it? Do you have a deadline? A Style Guide you must follow? A template you can use? (e.g., word limit, due date, pass/fail criteria such as avoiding plagiarism, etc.)

1.5 LET US SUM UP

1.6 FURTHER READING

1. NASA design process." NASA STEM Engagement [Online]. Available: https://www.nasa.gov/audience/ foreducators/best/index.html.Used for educational and noncommercial purposes.
2. B. Hyman, "Ch. 2: Problem formulation," in Fundamentals of Engineering Design, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002, pp. 40-54.

1.7 ASSIGNMENTS

Unit 2: PROFESSIONAL STYLE

2

Unit Structure

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to:

- Understand how to take a reader-centred approach (rather than a writer- centred one) that focuses on knowing your audience and writing specifically to meet their needs.
- Review and practice techniques to make your writing more precise and concise.
- Understand how to use rhetoric in a professional context, avoiding logical fallacies and inappropriate marketing language.
- Recognize how to choose strong verbs as the “engines” that drive efficient and effective sentences; revise passages to improve concision and flow.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, we defined technical writing as a “transactional” and primarily “problem- solving” genre and described some of the key conventions and considerations technical writers must keep in mind. In this chapter, we will look more deeply into the style of writing expected of this genre.

2.3 READER-CENTRED WRITING

Writing can be conceptualized as writer-centred or reader-centred. Things like diaries and journals are primarily writer-centred, in that they are written for the benefit of the writer. Your schoolwork may also have been somewhat writer-centred, in that often your goal was to “show what you know” and thereby “get a good grade.” Technical communications require that you shift this mind set and write for the benefit of your reader—or design the content and structure of your communication for your “user.” This mind set should be informed by an understanding of your audience. Use these guidelines and ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is my target audience? Are they internal or external readers? Upstream, downstream or lateral from you? Do I have multiple readers?
- What is their perspectives on the topic, on me, and on the document I will write? What are they expecting to do with the document? What is the document meant to accomplish? Why has it been requested? What is my role and relationship to my readers? What does the reader need to know? Already know? What does my reader NOT need to have explained?

- What is my goal or purpose in writing to these readers? What am I trying to communicate? What do I want them to do as a result of reading this document? How can I plan the content to meet my readers' needs?
- What is my reader's goal? Why does this audience want or need to read this document?

Getting a clear understanding of your audience is important in communicating effectively. It also enables you to imagine your audience as you write and revise. Keep asking yourself whether what you have said would be clear to your audience. How could you say it better?

2.3.1 Professional Tone

"Tone" refers to the attitude that a document conveys towards the topic and/or the reader. You have likely read something that sounded angry, or optimistic, or humorous, or cynical, or enthusiastic. These words characterize the tone. Technical communication tends to avoid displaying an obvious emotion, and instead strives for a neutral tone.

Tone is created through word choice (diction), word order (syntax), sentence construction, and viewpoint. Consider a piece of academic writing that you may have read. It creates a formal tone through its use of specialized terminology, sophisticated vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and third person voice. This style suits the genre because it is directed at experts and scholars in the field, and seeks to convey complex information densely and objectively, with an emphasis on reason, logic, and evidence.

Now consider a piece of business writing that you may have read. The tone may be slightly less formal but not colloquial. The language is direct and plain, and the sentences are shorter and more straightforward. It may make use of the second person ("you"). This style suits business writing because it is directed at colleagues, management, or clients who are seeking information clearly and quickly and who may need to take action on it.

2.3.2 Writing Constructively

Striking the appropriate tone involves understanding your purpose, context, and audience. It also involves an understanding that workplaces are often hierarchical, and that cooperation and teamwork are required. Therefore, it is important to consider how you want your reader to feel, and what may make your reader feel that way. Your goal is to write constructively, which means to use positive phrasing to convey your message to your reader. Table 2.1.1 illustrates the differences between destructive/negative and constructive/positive feelings the reader may experience as a result of the tone used in a document.

TABLE 2.1.1 Differences between destructive/negative and constructive/positive

Negative	**Constructive**
misunderstood	understood
outraged	conciliatory
disgusted	pleased
guilty	capable
belittled	empowered
patronized	respected
defensive	proud
chastised	valued
humiliated	honoured
excluded	a sense of belonging
resentment	contentment

Considering how your reader may feel after reading your document is an important part of revision. Did your tone come across like you hoped it would? Could it be misconstrued? Often this is where peer reviewing can be helpful. Asking a colleague to review your document before sending it off to its intended audience is a common professional practice.

Sometimes, you will need to communicate information that is unpleasant, such as delivering bad news or rejecting a request. Communicating constructively is possible—and arguably even more important—in these situations. Regardless of message, how can you ensure you are communicating constructively?

- **Adopt an adult-to-adult approach:** that is to say, avoid talking down to your reader in a patronizing tone, and likewise avoid sounding petulant or unwilling to take responsibility. Aim to communicate respectfully, responsibly, confidently, and cooperatively — as one responsible adult to another.
- **Be courteous:** focus on the reader as much as possible. Use "you" unless it results in blaming (one effective use of passive verbs is to avoid assigning blame: "mistakes were made"). Use traditionally accepted forms of courtesy and politeness. Use gender-neutral phrasing and plural forms, unless you are referring to a specific person and you know their gender.
- **Focus on the positive:** emphasize what you can do rather than what you can't. Try to avoid negative wording and phrasing (no, not, never, none, isn't, can't, don't, etc.). Focus on what can be improved.
- **Be genuine:** apologize if you have made a mistake. Take responsibility and promise to do better. Be authentic in your expression. Avoid sounding like marketing material (ad-speak). Make reasonable claims that can be backed with evidence.

Writer-Centred (I, we)	**Reader-Centred (you)**
If I can answer any questions, I'll be happy to do so.	If you have any questions, please ask.
We shipped the order this morning.	Your order was shipped this morning.
I'm happy to report that …	You'll be glad to know that …

Consider the following perspectives:

Negative Phrasing	Constructive Phrasing
We cannot process your claim because the necessaryforms have not been completed	Your claim can be processed as soon as we receive thenecessary forms
We do not take phone calls after 3:00pm on Fridays	*You try …*
We closed your case because we never received theinformation requested in our letter of April …	

2.3.3 Communicating with Precision

So far we have discussed the importance of writing with the reader in mind; of striking the right tone for your audience, message, and purpose; of writing constructively; and of writing persuasively. Now we move onto the actual writing itself. Two key characteristics of professional technical communication are that it is precise and concise. This precision and concision must be evident at all levels, from the overall document, to paragraphing, to sentence structure to word choice, and even to punctuation. Every word or phrase should have a distinct and useful purpose. If it doesn't, cut it or revise.

The 7 Cs of Professional Writing

The 7 C's are simply seven words that begin with C that characterize strong professional style. Applying the 7 C's of professional communication will result in writing that is

- **Clear**
- **Coherent**
- **Concise**
- **Concrete**
- **Correct**
- **Complete**
- **Courteous.**

CLEAR writing involves knowing what you want to say before you say it because often a lack of clarity comes from unclear thinking or poor planning; this, unfortunately, leads to confused or annoyed readers. Clear writing conveys the purpose of the document immediately to the reader; it matches vocabulary to the audience, avoiding jargon and unnecessary technical or obscure language while at the same time being precise. In clarifying your ideas, ensure that each sentence conveys one idea, and that each paragraph thoroughly develops one unified concept.

COHERENT writing ensures that the reader can easily follow your ideas and your train of thought. One idea should lead logically into the next through the use of transitional words and phrases, structural markers, planned repetition, sentences with clear subjects, headings that are clear, and effective and parallel lists. Writing that lacks coherence often sounds “choppy” and ideas seem disconnected or incomplete. Coherently connecting ideas is like building bridges between islands of thought so the reader can easily move from one idea to the next.

CONCISE writing uses the least words possible to convey the most meaning while still maintaining clarity. Avoid unnecessary padding, awkward phrasing, overuse of “to be” forms (is, are, was, were, am, be, being), long preposition strings, vagueness, unnecessary repetition and redundancy. Use active verbs whenever possible, and take the time to choose a single word rather than a long phrase or clichéd expression. Think of your word count like a budget; be cost effective by making sure every word you choose does effective work for you. Cut a word, save a buck! As William Zinsser asserts, “the secret of good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components.”1

CONCRETE writing involves using specific, precise language to paint a picture for your readers so that they can more easily understand your ideas. If you have to explain an abstract concept or idea, try to use examples, analogies, and precise language to illustrate it. Use measurable descriptors whenever possible; avoid vague terms like “big” or “good.” Try to get your readers to “see” your ideas by using specific terms and descriptions.

CORRECT writing uses standard English punctuation, sentence structure, usage, and grammar. Being correct also means providing accurate information, as well as using the right document type and form for the task.

COMPLETE writing includes all requested information and answers all relevant questions. The more concrete and specific you are, the more likely your document will be complete as well. Review your checklist of specifications before submitting your document to its intended reader.

COURTEOUS writing entails designing a reader-friendly, easy-to-read document; using tactful language and appropriate modes of addressing the audience; and avoiding potentially offensive terminology, usage, and tone. As we have discussed in an early section, without courtesy you cannot be constructive.

In some cases, some of these might come into conflict: what if being too concise results in a tone that sounds terse, or an idea that seems incomplete? Figure 2.2.1 illustrates one method of putting all the 7Cs together

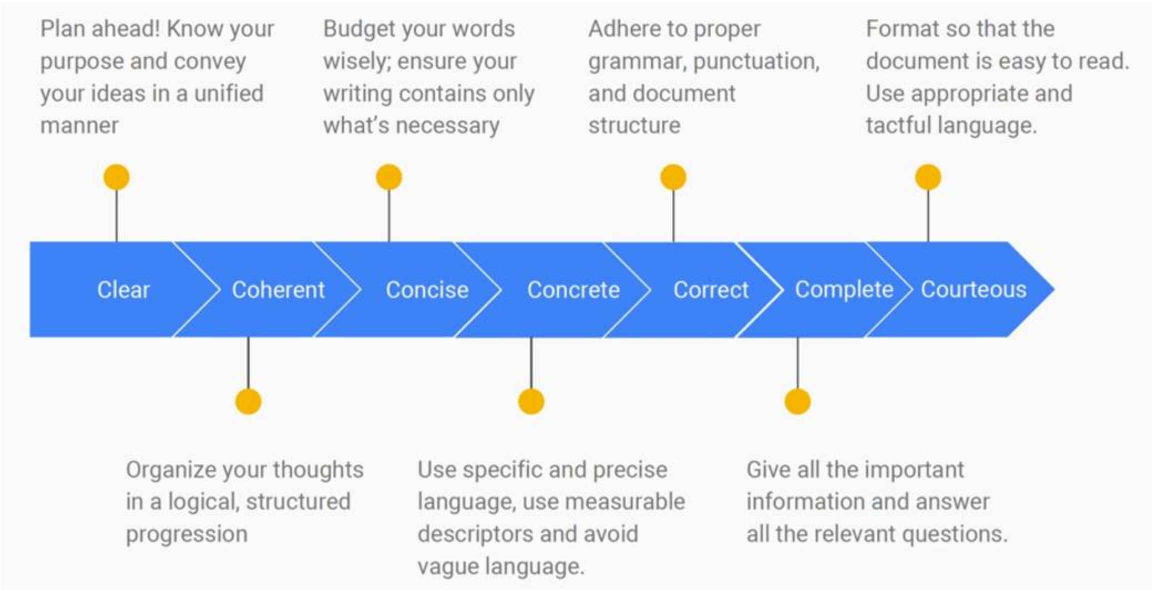


Figure 2.2.1 Putting all the 7Cs together 2 [Image description]

Be mindful of the tradeoffs, and always give priority to being clear: writing that lacks clarity cannot be understood and therefore cannot achieve its purpose. Writing that adheres to the 7 C's helps to establish your credibility as a technical professional.

2.3.4 Sentence Variety and Length

While variety makes for interesting writing, too much of it can also reduce clarity and precision. Technical writing tends to use simple sentence structures more often than the other types. That said, simple does not necessarily mean “simplistic,” short, or lacking in density. Remember that in grammatical terms, simple just means that it has one main clause (one subject and one predicate). You can still convey quite a bit of concrete information in a simple sentence.

The other consideration for precise writing is length. Your sentences should vary in length just as they can vary in type. However, you want to avoid having too many long sentences because they take longer to read and are often more complex. That is appropriate in academic writing but less so in technical writing. The goal is to aim for an average of around 20 to 30 words per sentence. Reserve the short sentences for main points and use longer sentences for supporting points that clarify or explain cause and effect relationships. If you feel the sentence is too long, break it into two sentences. You do not want your reader to have to read a sentence twice to understand it. If you make compound or complex sentences, ensure that you use appropriate coordinating or subordinating strategies to make the relationship between clauses perfectly clear.

2.3.5 Precise Wording

Technical writing is precise writing. Vague, overly general, hyperbolic or subjective/ambiguous terms are simply not appropriate in this genre. You do not want to choose words and phrasing that could be interpreted in more than one way. Choose words that most precisely, concisely, and accurately convey your point. Below are some guidelines and examples to follow for using precise wording.

1. Replace abstract nouns with verbs.

Verbs, more than nouns, help convey ideas concisely, so where possible, avoid using nouns derived from verbs. Often these abstract nouns end in –tion and –ment. See examples in the following chart.

Abstract Noun	Verb
acquisition	acquire
analysis	analyze
recommendation	recommend
observation	observe
application	apply

confirmation	confirm
development	develop
ability	able, can
assessment	assess

2. Prefer short words to long words and phrases.

The goal is to communicate directly and plainly so use short, direct words whenever possible. In other words, don't use long words or phrases when short ones will do. Write to express, not impress.

Long	**Short**
cognizant; be cognizant of	aware, know
commence; commencement	begin, beginning
utilize; utilization	use (v), use (n)
inquire; make an inquiry	ask
finalize; finalization	complete, end
afford an opportunity to	permit, allow
at this point in time	now, currently
due to the fact that	because, due to
has the ability to	can

3. Avoid clichés.

Clichés are expressions that you have probably heard and used hundreds of times. They are over-used expressions that have largely lost their meaning and impact.

Clichés	**Alternatives**
as plain as day	plainly, obvious, clear
ballpark figure	about, approximately
few and far between	rare, infrequent
needless to say	of course, obviously
last but not least	finally, lastly
as far as___is concerned	?

4. Avoid cluttered constructions.

This category includes redundancies, repetitions, and “there is/are” and “it is” constructions.

Redundancies		
combine/join ~~together~~	fill ~~completely~~	unite ~~as one~~
finish ~~entirely~~	refer/return/revert ~~back~~ to	emphasize/stress ~~strongly~~
examine (closely)	~~suddenly~~ interrupt	~~better/further~~ enhance
~~eventually~~ evolve ~~over time~~	~~strictly~~ forbid	rely/depend ~~heavily~~
plan ~~ahead~~	~~harshly~~ condemn	protest ~~against~~
~~completely~~ surround ~~on all sides~~	estimate/approximate ~~roughly~~	gather/assemble ~~together~~
~~clearly~~ articulate	~~carefully~~ consider	~~successfully~~ prove
~~future~~ plan	~~mutual~~ agreement	years ~~of age~~
in ~~actual~~ fact	~~positive~~ benefits	~~end~~ result/product

5. Use accurate wording.

Sometimes this requires more words instead of fewer, so do not sacrifice clarity for concision. Make sure your words convey the meaning you intend. Avoid using words that have several possible meanings; do not leave room for ambiguity or alternate interpretations of your ideas. Keep in mind that readers of technical writing tend to choose literal meanings, so avoid figurative language that might be confusing (for example, using the word “decent” to describe something you like or think is good). Separate facts from opinions by using phrases like “we recommend,” “we believe,” or “in our opinion.” Use consistent terminology rather than looking for synonyms that may be less precise.

Qualify statements that need qualifying, especially if there is possibility for misinterpretation. Do not overstate through the use of absolutes and intensifiers. Avoid overusing intensifiers like “extremely,” and avoid absolutes like “never, always, all, none” as these are almost never accurate. Remember Obiwan Kenobi’s warning:

“Only a Sith deals in absolutes.”3

We tend to overuse qualifiers and intensifiers, so below are some that you should be aware of and consider whether you are using them effectively.

Overused Intensifiers					
absolutely	actually	assuredly	certainly	clearly	completely
considerably	definitely	effectively	extremely	fundamentally	drastically
highly	in fact	incredibly	inevitably	indeed	interestingly
markedly	naturally	of course	particularly	significantly	surely
totally	utterly	very	really	remarkably	tremendously

For a comprehensive list of words and phrases that should be used with caution, see Kim Blank's "Wordiness, Wordiness, Wordiness List."

6. Use the active voice.

The active voice emphasizes the person/thing doing the action in a sentence. For example, The outfielder throws the ball. The subject, "outfielder" actively performs the action of the verb "throw." The passive voice emphasizes the recipient of the action. In other words, something is being done to something by somebody: The ball was thrown (by the outfielder). Passive constructions are generally wordier and often leave out the person/thing doing the action.

Active	**Passive**
S →V →O	**S ←V ←O**
Subject → actively does the action of the verb → tothe object of the sentence	Subject ← passively receives the action of the verb ←from the object
Subject → acts → on object	Subject ← is acted upon ← by the object

While the passive voice has a place—particularly if you want to emphasize the receiver of an action as the subject of the sentence, or the action itself, or you want to avoid using first person—its overuse results in writing that is wordy, vague, and stuffy. When possible, use the active voice to convey who or what performs the action of the verb.

Precise writing encapsulates many of the 7 C’s; it is clear, concise, concrete, and correct. But it is also accurate and active. To write precisely and apply the 7 C’s, it is important to look critically at your sentences, perhaps in a way you may not have done before. You need to consider the design of those sentences, from the words to the phrases to the clauses, to ensure that you are communicating your message effectively.

2.4 WRITING TO PERSUADE

Sometimes, you may want to persuade your reader to take a particular action or position on an issue. To be effective, you should consider the following elements of persuasion, often referred to as Rhetorical Appeals. The ancient Greek words are ethos, pathos, logos, and kairos. These concepts are still critical in rhetoric studies today (see Figure 2.3.1):

- Ethos – Appeal to Credibility/Authority: this element of persuasion involves establishing your credibility, expertise, or authority to be making the argument. What experience or expertise do you have? What knowledge or skills do you possess? What’s your role within the organization, and/or in relation to the reader? Why should the reader trust you as a reliable, knowledgeable, authoritative, and ethical source of information?
- Pathos – Appeal to Emotion/Interest/Values: this element involves appealing to the emotions, values, and/or interests of the reader. How does your proposal benefit them? Why should they care about it? How does it relate to the goals of the organization? How can you build “common ground” with your reader? What will make your reader feel “good” about your project? How can you evoke emotions such as pride or outrage?
- Logos – Appeal to Reason/Logic: this element involves grounding your argument in logic, reason, and evidence. What evidence supports your claims? On what facts and data is your reasoning based? Arguments grounded in reason and evidence are often considered the strongest. Government organizations and companies alike generally like to make “evidence- based decisions.”
- Kairos – Appeal to Timeliness/Appropriateness: using this appeal means being aware of what is appropriate and timely in a given rhetorical situation. Sometimes, a well-crafted argument can fail because it comes at the wrong time.

Kairos involves knowing what is "in" or "hot" right now, what is an important topic or issue, and how best to discuss it; knowing when it is the "right time" to broach a topic or propose an idea; knowing how to use the appropriate tone, level of formality and decorum for the specific situation.

Finding the appropriate blend of appeals is critical to making a successful argument; consider that when making your case, you often have to "win both hearts and minds"—so you'll need to appeal to both emotions and logic, do whatever you can to show the reader that you are a trustworthy source of information, and present your argument at the most opportune time. In addition to these elements, you should also be mindful of the word choice and tone so that you are presenting a persuasive argument that is also constructive and conveys the appropriate tone for your intended audience, message, and purpose.

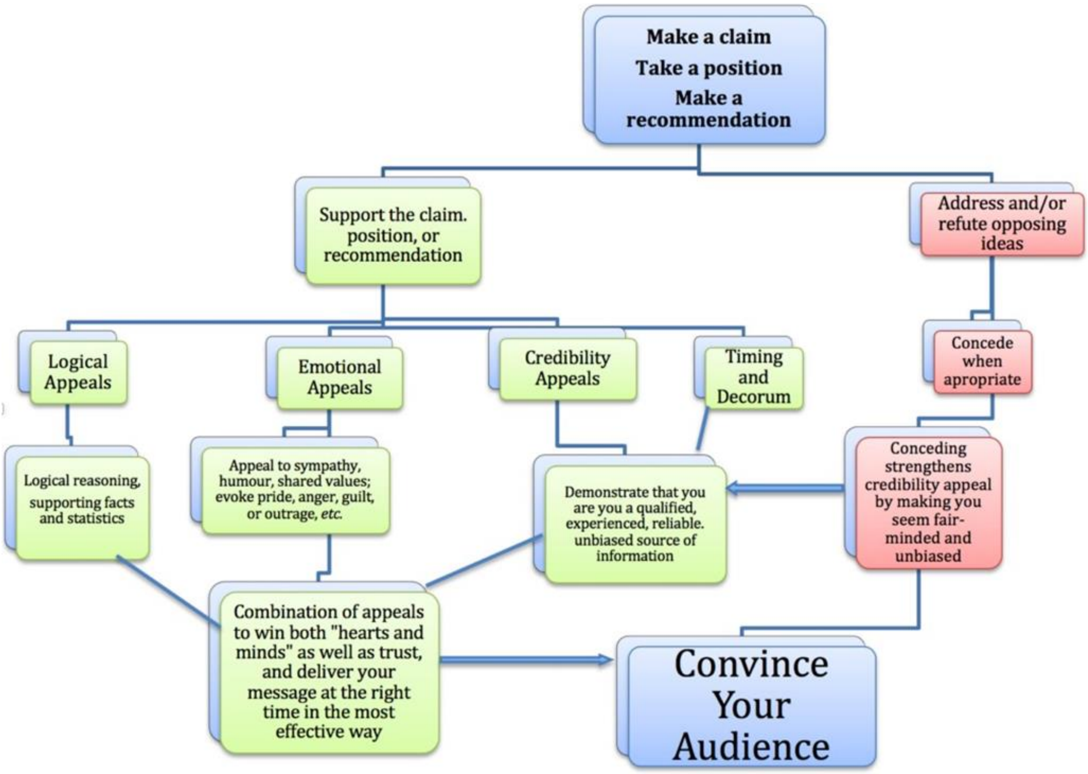


Figure 2.3.1 Using the rhetorical appeals to convince and audience [Image description]

2.4.1 Avoiding Ad-Speak

“Ad-speak” refers to the kind of language often used in advertisements. Its aim is to convince consumers to buy something, whether they need it or not, hopefully without thinking too much about it. Because we hear this kind of rhetoric all the time, it easily becomes habit to use it ourselves. We must break this habit when communicating in professional contexts.

Ad-Speak tends to use strategies such as

- Emotional manipulation
- Logical fallacies
- Hyperbole
- Exaggeration or dishonesty
- Vague claims
- Incomplete or cherry-picked data
- Biased viewpoints
- Hired actors rather than professionals or experts as spokespeople.

As a student in a professionalizing program learning the specialized skills and developing the sense of social obligation needed to become a trusted professional, you should avoid using “sensational” language characteristic of marketing languge. Instead, when trying to persuade your reader, make sure you use quantifiable, measurable descriptors and objective language in your writing. You cannot determine how many units of “excellence” something has, or its quantifiable amount of “awesomeness,” “fantastic-ness,” or “extraordinariness.” Describing something as “incredible” literally means it’s unbelievable. So avoid using these kinds of words shown in Figure 2.3.2.

Figure 2.3.2 Ad-Speak Word Cloud.

Find measurable terms like “efficiency” (in time or energy use), “effectiveness” at fulfilling a specific task, measurable benefits and/or costs, or even “popularity” as measured by a survey.

2.4.2 Communicating Ethically

In professional writing, communicating ethically is critically important. Ethical communications involves communicating from a place of accountability, responsibility, integrity, and values. If you are communicating ethically, you are demonstrating respect for your reader, the organizations you work for and with, and the culture and context within which you work. You also foster fairness and trust through honesty. Failure to maintain integrity and ethics can result in consequences ranging from damage to reputation, loss of work, lawsuits, criminal charges, and even tragic loss of life.

This is precisely why many professional associations have guidelines that govern the ethical behavior of their membership. Two such documents that may be relevant to you are the Faculty of Engineering’s “Standards for Professional Behavior” (.pdf) and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC APEGBC Code-of-Ethics (.pdf). For example, take note of the portions of the APEGBC Code of Ethics that relate specifically to ethical communication.

It is important to become familiar with these standards of practice, and to consider how they impact communication practices. Remember that you are communicating in a professional context, and that comes with responsibility. Consider the different rhetorical situations diagrammed in Figure 2.3.3, one for a marketer and one for an engineer.

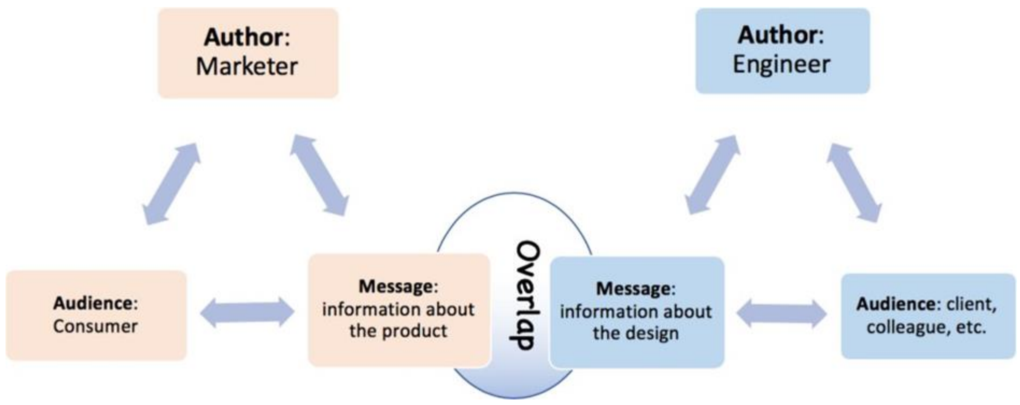


Figure 2.3.3 Comparison of the rhetorical situation for a marketer vs. an engineer. [Image Description]

Clearly, there may be some overlap, but there will also be significant differences based on the needs and expectations of the audience and the kind of message being delivered. We hear marketing language so often that it is easy to fall into the habit of using it, even when it's not appropriate. Make sure you are not using "ad-speak" when trying to persuade in a professional context.

2.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF VERBS

Much of the style advice given so far revolves around the importance of verbs. Think of your sentence as a machine, and the verb as the engine that makes the machine work. Like machines, sentences can function efficiently or inefficiently, and the use of a strong verb is one way to make them work effectively. Here are some key principles regarding the effective use of verbs in your sentences. While effective sentences may occasionally deviate from the suggestions in this list, try to follow these guidelines as often as possible:

- Keep the subject and the verb close together; avoid separating them with words or phrases that could create confusion
- Place the verb near the beginning of the sentence (and close to the subject)
- Maintain a high verb/word ratio in your sentence
- Prefer active verb constructions over passive ones
- Avoid "to be" verbs (am, is, are, was, were, being, been, be)
- Try to turn nominalizations (abstract nouns) back into verbs.

Use the verb strength chart in Table 2.4.1 as a guide to “elevate” weaker verbs (or words with implied action) in a sentence to stronger forms.

Verb Forms	Verb Strength	Examples
Command/Imperative	**STRONG**	**Maintain** the machine properly! **Write** the report!
Active Indicative* (S → V)		He **maintains** the machine regularly. She **writes** reports frequently.
Active conditional		She **would maintain** the machine **if** he would let her. He **would write** reports if he had more training.
Gerunds (_____-ing) Infinitives (to _______) (*these do not function as verbs in your sentence; actual verbs are highlighted in yellow*)		While **maintaining** the machine, he gets quite dirty. Report **writing** takes skill. It takes a lot of time **to maintain** this machine. **To write** effectively, one must get a sense of the audience.
Passive (S ← V) Passive Conditional		The machine **is maintained** by him. It **would be maintained** by her if… The report **was written** by her. Reports **would be written** by him if…
Nominalizations (*verbs turned into abstract nouns)* Participles (*nouns or adjectives that used to be verbs*)	**WEAK**	Machine **maintenance** is dirty work. A well-**maintained** machine is a thing of beauty. **Written** work must be free of errors.

While you are not likely to use the command form very often, unless you are writing instructions, the second strongest form, Active Indicative, is the one you want to use most often (say, in about 80% of your sentences).

Part of the skill of using active verbs lies in choosing the verbs that precisely describes the action you want to convey. English speakers have become somewhat lazy in choosing a small selection of verbs most of the time (to be, to do, to get, to make, to have, to put); as a result, these often-used verbs have come to have so many possible meanings that they are almost meaningless. Try looking up “make” or “have” in the dictionary; you will see pages and pages of possible meanings! Whenever possible, avoid these bland verbs and use more precise, descriptive verbs, as indicated in Table 2.4.2.

TABLE 2.4.2 Bland vs. descriptive verbs

Bland Verbs	**Descriptive Verbs**
Signal Verbs: Says States Talks about Discusses Writes	Describe the rhetorical purpose behind what the author/speaker “says”:Explains, clarifies Describes, illustrates Claims, argues, maintains Asserts, stresses, emphasizes Recommends, urges, suggests
Is, are, was, were being beenIs <u>*verb*</u>-ing	Instead of indicating what or how something “**is**,” describe what it **DOES**, bychoosing a precise, active verb. Replace progressive form (*is__ing*) with indicative form *She is describing → She describes*
Get, gets	Usually too colloquial (or passive); instead you could use more specific verbssuch as Become, acquire, obtain, receive, prepare, achieve, earn, contract, catch,understand, appreciate, *etc*.

Do, does	Avoid using the *emphatic* tense in formal writing:It *does* work → it **works**. I *do* crack when I see apostrophe errors → I **crack** when I see apostrophe errors. Instead: Perform, prepare, complete, *etc*.
Has, have Has to, have to	This verb has many potential meanings! Try to find a more specific verb that"have/has" or "has to": • She **owns** a car • They **consume/eat** a meal • The product **includes** many optional features • The process **entails** several steps Instead of "have to" try: Must, require, need, *etc*.
Make	Build, construct, erect, devise, create, design, manufacture, produce, prepare, earn, etc. Make a recommendation → recommend Make a promise → promise Make a plan → plan

2.6 LET US SUM UP

Table 2.4.3 sums up many key characteristics of effective professional style that you should try to avoid(poor style) and implement (effective style) while writing technical documents.

TABLE 2.4.3 Key characteristics of effective professional style

Poor Style	Effective Style
Low VERB/WORD ratio per sentence	High VERB/WORD ratio per sentence
Excessive 'is/are' verbs	Concrete, descriptive verbs
Excessive passive verb constructions	Active verb constructions
Abstract or vague nouns	Concrete and specific nouns
Many prepositional phrases	Few prepositional phrases
Subject and verb are separated by words or phrases	Subject and verb are close together
Verb is near the end of the sentence	Verb is near the beginning of the sentence

Main idea (subject-verb relationship) is difficult to find	Main idea is clear
Sentence must be read more than once to understand it	Meaning is clear the first time you read it
Long, rambling sentences	Precise, specific sentences

2.7 FURTHER READING

For further reading, see “Communication in the Workplace: What Can NC State Students Expect?” a study based on the responses of over 1000 professionals from various fields, including engineering, on how important business, technical and scientific communication is to their work.

2.8 ASSIGNMENTS

Unit 3: TECHNICAL WRITING

3

Unit Structure

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to:

- Understand the importance of “readability” to your technical audience, and what that looks like in technical documents.
- Understand how to use headings to organize information logically to enhance readers’ comprehension.
- Understand the rules for embedding various kinds of lists in your documents to emphasize key points and simplify text.
- Understand how to integrate various kinds of figures and tables into documents to effectively present visual data and images.
- Apply revision strategies to enhance clarity and readability.

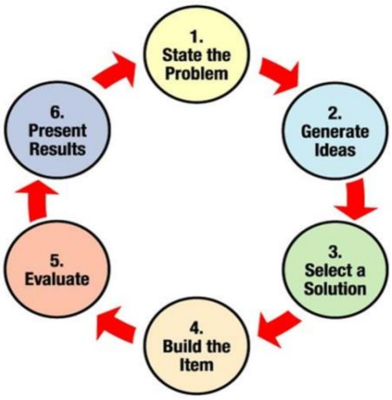
3.2 INTRODUCTION

Document design is the “nuts and bolts” of technical writing. No matter how brilliant or important the content, if it is not formatted in way that enhances readability, it will likely not receive the attention it deserves. This section includes the information on how technical writers use formatting features to optimize readability.

3.3 PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS TASKS

In the workplace, many of the communications tasks you perform are designed to solve a problem or improve a situation. Whether you are doing work for a client, for your employer, with your team, or for someone else, you will typically use some sort of design process to tackle and solve the problem. A clearly-articulated design process provides you with a clear, step-by-step plan for finding the best solution for your situation.

Take a moment to search the Internet for the term “design process” and look at “images.” You will find many variations. Have a look at several of them and see if you can find a common pattern.



One commonality you will likely find in examining other people’s design process diagrams is this: the first step in designing any solution is to clearly define the problem.

Figure 1.1.1 shows NASA's basic design process. Think about the kind of communication that each step of this process might entail.

You cannot begin to work on solutions until you have a clear definition of the problem and goals you want to achieve. This critical first stage of the design process requires that you effectively communicate with the "client" or whoever has the "problem" that needs solving. Poor communication at this stage can derail a project from the start.

For our purposes, we will use Barry Hyman's Problem Formulation model to clearly define a problem. Hyman's Problem Formulation model consists of 4 elements:

5. Need Statement: recognizes and describes the need for a solution or improvement to an "unsatisfactory situation." It answers the questions, "what is wrong with the way things are currently? What is unsatisfactory about it? What negative effects does this situation cause?" You may need to do research and supply data to quantify the negative effects.
6. Goal Statement: describes what the improved situation would look like once a solution has been implemented. The goal statement defines the scope of your search for a solution. At this point, do not describe your solution, only the goal that any proposed solution should achieve. The broader you make your goal, the more numerous and varied the solution can be; a narrowly focused goal limits the number and variety of possible solutions.
7. Objectives: define measurable, specific outcomes that any feasible solution should optimize (aspects you can use to "grade" the effectiveness of the solution). Objectives provide you with ways to quantifiably measure how well any solution will solve the problem; ideally, they will allow you to compare multiple solutions and figure out which one is most effective (which one gets the highest score on meeting the objectives?).
8. Constraints: define the limits that any feasible solution must adhere to in order to be acceptable (pass/fail conditions, range limits, etc.). The key word here is must — constraints are the "go/no go" conditions that determine whether a solution is acceptable or not. These often include budget and time limits, as well as legal, safety and regulatory requirements.

3.4 COMMUNICATION AS SOLUTION

This model can apply to a communications task as well as more physical design tasks. Imagine your communications task as something that will solve a problem or improve a situation. Before you begin drafting this document or presentation, define the problem you want to solve with this document:

- **Understand the Need:** consider what gave rise to the need to communicate. Does someone lack sufficient information to make a decision or take a position on an issue? Did someone request information? Is there some unsatisfactory situation that needs to be remedied by communicating with your audience? What specifically is unsatisfactory about it? Consider your audience. For example
  - *A potential client lacks sufficient information on whether the solution I have proposed to solve the client's problem will be feasible, affordable, and effective.*
  - *My instructor lacks sufficient examples of my written work to assign a grade for how well I met the course learning objectives.*
- **Establish a Goal:** consider your purpose in writing. What do you want your reader to do, think, or know? Do you want your reader to make a decision? Change their opinion or behaviour? Follow a course of action? What is your desired outcome? And what form and style of communication will best lead to that outcome? For example
  - *Provide the client with enough information, in an effective and readable format, to make a decision (ideally, to hire you to build the solution for the problem).*
  - *Provide my instructor with samples of my writing that demonstrate my achievement of the course learning objectives (provide relevant and complete information in a professionally appropriate format, using evidence-based argument; earn an A+ grade on the assignment.)*
- **Define Objectives:** consider the specifics of your message and your audience to determine what criteria you should meet. What form should it take? What content elements will you need to include? What kind of research will be required? What information does your audience want/need? What do they already know?
  - *Review the client's RFP to see what specific objectives it lists.*
  - *Review the Technical Report Grading Rubric to determine specific requirements and objectives that will be graded by your instructor.*
- **Identify Constraints:** what are the pass/fail conditions of this document? Consider your rhetorical situation. What conditions exist that present barriers or challenges to communication? How can you address them? For example, how

much time is your audience willing to spend on this? What format and style do they require? How long can you make your document or presentation? How much time do you have to create it? Do you have a deadline? A Style Guide you must follow? A template you can use? (e.g., word limit, due date, pass/fail criteria such as avoiding plagiarism, etc.)

3.5 Conventions and Characteristics

Every genre of writing has unique characteristics and rules, called conventions, that help readers classify a document as belonging to a particular genre. This also applies to film and music. Think about the last movie you saw. What type of movie was it? What about that movie gave you that impression? Did the characters wear Stetson hats, ride horses, and carry guns? Did they fly in space ships, encounter alien beings, and use futuristic technology? Those elements are typical conventions of Western and Science Fiction genres.

Non-fiction is a category that can be broken into various genres. The main genres that are relevant to us are journalism (newspaper writing), academic writing (written by scholars and published in peer reviewed academic journals or books), and technical writing. Before we get into the specific conventions that characterize technical writing, take a moment to think back to your academic writing course and list some conventions typical of journalism (popular press) and academic writing in Table 1.1.1.

TABLE 1.1.1 Identify the conventions for journalistic and academic writing

Criteria	Journalistic	Academic
Purpose		
Audience		
Writing Style		
Tone		
Structure		
Format/Formatting		
Other Features		

Like journalism and scholarly writing, technical writing also has distinct features that readers expect to see in documents that fall within this genre. These include (a) use of headings to organize information into coherent sections, (b) use of lists to present information concisely, (c) use of figures and tables to present data and information visually, and (d) use of visual design to enhance readability (all of these topics are covered in Chapter 3: Document Design). These conventions are connected to the main purposes of technical writing, which include communicating the following:

- Technical or specialized information in an accessible and usable ways
- Clear instructions on how to do something in a clear manner
- Information that advances the goals of the company or organization.

Technical documentation is intended to communicate information to the people who need it in a way that is clear and easy to read, at the right time to help make decisions and to support productivity. Designing technical communication is like designing any other product for an intended user: the ultimate goal is to make it "user friendly."

Key words here are accessible, usable, clear, goal-oriented, effective, and reader-centred. The characteristics of technical writing support these goals and concepts.

If we filled in **Table 1.1** with typical characteristics of technical writing, it might look something like **Table 1.1.2:**

TABLE 1.1.2 Conventions of technical writing

Criteria	Technical Writing
Purpose	To communicate technical and specialized information in a clear, accessible, usable manner to people who need to use it to make decisions, perform processes, or support company goals.
Audience	Varied, but can include fellow employees such as subordinates, colleagues, managers, and executives, as well as clients and other stakeholders, the general public, and even readers within the legal system.
Writing Style	Concise, clear, plain, and direct language; may include specialized terminology; typically uses short sentences and paragraphs; uses active voice; makes purpose immediately clear.
Tone	Business/professional in tone, which falls between formal and informal; mayuse first person or second person if appropriate; courteous and constructive.
Structure	Highly structured; short paragraphs; clear transitions and structural cues (headings and sub-headings) to move the reader through and direct the reader.

Format/Formatting	Can be in electronic, visual, or printed formats; may be long (reports) or short (emails, letters, memos); often uses style guides to describe required formatting features; uses headings, lists, figures and tables.
Other Features	Typically objective and neutral; ideas are evidence and data-driven; descriptors are precise and quantitative whenever possible.

3.6 Understanding the Rhetorical Situation

It is common knowledge in the workplace that no one really wants to read what you write, and even if they want to or have to read it, they will likely not read all of it. So how do you get your reader to understand what you need quickly and efficiently? Start by doing a detailed Task and Audience Analysis — make sure you understand the "rhetorical situation." Before you begin drafting a document, determine the needs of your rhetorical situation (See Figure 1.3.1).

Figure 1.3.1 The Rhetorical Situation.

The "rhetorical situation" is a term used to describe the components of any situation in which you may want to communicate, whether in written or oral form. To define a "rhetorical situation," ask yourself this question: "who is talking to whom about what, how, and why?" There are five main components:

- Purpose
- Writer
- Audience
- Message
- Context/Culture

PURPOSE refers to the why you are writing. Determining your purpose requires that you engage in Task Analysis — that is, determine what you hope to accomplish by writing this document. Ask yourself what you hope the reader(s) will do/think/decide/ or how they will behave as a result of reading the text. There are three general purposes for communication in the workplace: 1) to create a record, 2) to give or request information, and 3) to persuade.

Within those general purposes, you will find a myriad of specific purposes. For example, your purpose may be to propose an innovative solution to a specific problem. In this case, you want the reader to agree to explore the idea further, or approve funding for further research and development, which would fall under the general purpose of writing to persuade.

WRITER refers to you, the writer/creator/designer of the communication. It is important to examine your own motivation for writing and any biases, past experiences, and knowledge you bring to the writing situation. These elements will influence how you craft the message, whether positively or negatively. This examination should also include your role within the organization, as well as your position relative to your target audience.

AUDIENCE refers to your readers/listeners/viewers/users. Audience Analysis is possibly the most critical part of understanding the rhetorical situation. Consider Figure 1.3.2 below. Is your audience internal (within your company) or external (such as clients, suppliers, customers, other stakeholders)? Are they lateral to you (at the same position or level), upstream from you (management), or downstream from you (employees, subordinates)? Who is the primary audience? Who are the secondary audiences? These questions, and others, help you to create an understanding of your audience that will help you craft a message that is designed to effectively communicate specifically to them.

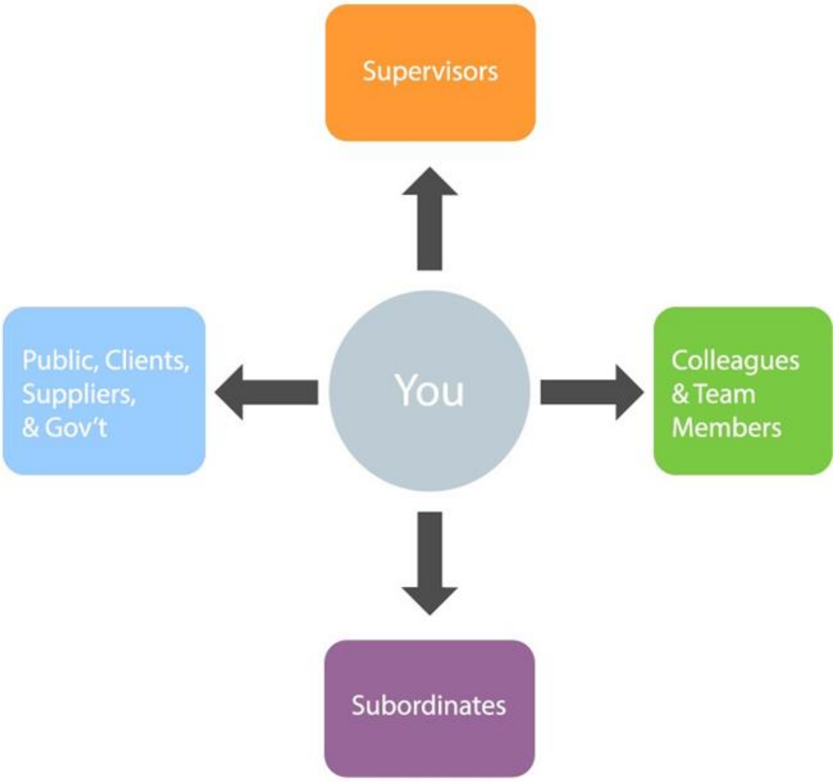


Figure 1.3.2 Understanding your relationship to your audience.

Keep in mind that your different audiences will also have a specific purpose in reading your document. Consider what their various purposes might be, and how you can best help them achieve their purpose. Considering what they are expected to do with the information you provide will help you craft your message effectively. Consider also that technical writing often has a long "life-span" – a document you write today could be filed away and reviewed months or even years down the road. Consider the needs of that audience as well.

Audience	Purpose for Reading
Executives	Make decisions
Supervising Experts/Managers	Advise decision makers; direct subordinates
Technical Experts/Co-workers	Implement decisions; advise
Lay People/Public/Clients	Become informed; choose options; make decisions

Some companies develop audience profiles to help guide their communications. This is a good exercise whenever you have something to communicate, especially if the information is complex. Here are some questions to consider as part of the audience profile:

Developing an Audience Profile

- Who are your primary readers? (specific names and titles, or general roles)
- Are they above you in the organizational hierarchy? Lateral, subordinate? Outside of your organization?
- Who else might read this document? (secondary readers)
- Do you know what their attitude towards the topic is?
- How might cultural differences affect their expectations and interpretations?
- How much technical background do the readers have?
- How much do they already know about the topic?

MESSAGE refers to what information you want to communicate. This is the content of your document. It should be aligned to your purpose and targeted to your audience. While it is important to carefully choose what content your audience needs, it is equally critical to cut out content that your audience does not need or want. "Time is money" may be a tired old cliché, but it is important to avoid wasting your audience's time with information that is unnecessary or irrelevant to them. Your message should be professional, and expressed in an appropriate tone for the audience, purpose, and context. We will discuss aspects of using a professional style and tone in crafting your message more in Chapter 2.

CONTEXT refers to the situation that creates the need for the writing. In other words, what has happened or needs to happen that creates the need for communication? The context is influenced by timing, location, current events, and culture, which can be organizational or social. Ignoring the context for your communication could result in awkward situations, or possibly offensive ones. It will almost certainly impact your ability to clearly convey your message to your audience.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

3.8 FURTHER READING

3. NASA design process." NASA STEM Engagement [Online]. Available: https://www.nasa.gov/audience/ foreducators/best/index.html.Used for educational and noncommercial purposes.
4. B. Hyman, “Ch. 2: Problem formulation,” in Fundamentals of Engineering Design, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002, pp. 40-54.

3.9 ASSIGNMENTS

Unit 4: TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

4

Unit Structure

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit student should be able to:

- Understand how to use strategies and documents, such as Team Charters, Agendas, Minutes, and Work Logs to facilitate effective teamwork.
- Understand various models of team dynamics, and reflect on how you might apply them to help you and your team mates resolve conflicts and work productively.
- Understand the processes and strategies for writing collaboratively, and reflect on what works for your team.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

As companion reading to this chapter that offers a comprehensive discussion of how to work effectively in teams, I recommend reading the sections called "Introduction to Teamwork" and "Project Management" in Designing Engineers: An Introductory Text, by Susan McCahan et al.

4.3 TEAM PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Teamwork is a key component of almost any workplace, but it is essential in engineering and software development environments where you often find yourself working as part of a team on large projects. Imagine for a moment how many people must work together to designs a product like Skyrim (click here if you want to know: Skyrim development team).

It is widely accepted that team synergy and team intelligence lead to greater efficiency and better results in most situations. Why, then, are some people reluctant to engage in teamwork? Perhaps this reluctance stems from ineffective or dysfunctional teamwork experiences in the past. Often the culprit in these situations is not a "poor team player" or an "inability to get along with others." More likely it was caused by one of two things: misaligned goals or confusion over roles. For teamwork to be effective, all members of the team must understand and share the goals of the project, and all members must fully understand their roles—what is expected of them, and how they will be held accountable. An effective team leader will make sure that goals and roles are fully understood by all team members.

"Introduction to Teamwork," a section in Designing Engineers, by Susan McCahan et al. provides a detailed description of the stages of the Tuckman Team Formation model and the need for effective communications at each stage. A team, according to McCahan et al., "is a group of people who come together to work in an interrelated manner towards a common goal." They go on to differentiate a team from a group by noting that a team is connected by "a common purpose or goal and the reliance on the skills of all the members to meet the goal" 2. In other words, team members see themselves as part of a collective working towards a common goal rather than individuals working on separate tasks that may lead to an end product. In order to work effectively, team members need to communicate clearly and constructively, and learn how to deal with crises and conflicts that will inevitably arise.

Some common benefits of working in teams include increased productivity, increased innovation, and increased efficiency. Excellent teams have synergy that makes them more than simply the sum of their parts. The term "team intelligence" refers to the fact that collectively, teams have more knowledge and skill than the single individuals working separately. However, challenges can also arise when working in a team. Conflicts within a team do occur and often they begin as a result of poor communication and weak focus. Some ways to handle these challenges include the following:

- **Elect a team leader:** the team leader will act as the hub for communication and tasks. This person helps provide direction and guidance for the team. This should be someone who has earned the team's respect and who can be persuasive and tactful. This role can be rotated among team members.
- **Ensure the goal is clear:** a team is governed by the goal that everyone works to achieve. It is important that the goal is clearly understood and agreed upon by everyone on the team.
- **Establish team rules:** as a team, determine the rules by which the team will operate. These should include expectations around time, meetings, attendance, communication, decision-making, contribution, and mechanisms to warn and/or fire a team member or quit a team.

- **Assign responsibilities:** as part of the breakdown of tasks, members should be assigned responsibility for certain tasks, which means that they are the primary leads in preventing and addressing issues that come up in that area.
- **Set agendas for meetings and keep minutes:** to ensure that team meeting time is useful and achieves its purpose, plan an agenda for each meeting to help keep everyone on task. In addition, have someone take minutes to record decisions that are made. This record helps prevent repetition and ensures work actually gets done.
- **Determine the timing for tasks:** task timing involves two aspects: the duration for completing the task and the timing of the task in relation to the other tasks. Typically, tasks take longer than you think they will so it is often better to add 25% to your duration estimate. The timing of the tasks is important to figure out because some tasks can be completed concurrently, but others may have to be sequenced. Professionals often use Gantt Charts to outline these tasks and the time they will take within the overall project scale.
- **Manage communications:** if a problem arises with someone on the team, the team leader should speak privately to the person and clearly indicate what needs to change and why. The focus should be on the behaviour, not on the person's character. Issues should be dealt with quickly rather than left to deteriorate further. If this does not solve the problem, then try other approaches (See McCahan et al. "Management Strategies" for more information).

There are several tools and strategies that teams can use to improve their functioning and productivity. Some examples include using the following documents:

- **Team Charter:** outlines the rules and expectations agreed upon by the team
- **Meeting Agenda:** outlines the main points for discussion at a meeting
- **Meeting Minutes:** records the decisions and relevant discussion points for a meeting
- **Work Logs:** records the tasks and time spent for each team member
- **Status Reports:** records the completed tasks and work left to complete
- **Gantt Chart:** breaks down tasks and their estimated duration over the work period.

There are also many software programs and apps that can help teams manage projects. Students often use Google docs to work collaboratively on a document or project. The most common one used in the workplace is Microsoft Project. However, other productivity apps can be used to great effect as well. Slack, Wrike, and Asana are free popular web based options. Whatever tool you choose to use, it should be something that all members can access and understand.

4.4 MEETING DOCUMENTS: AGENDAS AND MINUTES

What happens at team meetings should be planned and recorded for future reference. Agendas and Minutes are documents that do this. A meeting also should have a chair (the person who keeps things on track) and a recorder (who records what happened and what decisions were made). The Agenda is the plan for what you want to discuss and accomplish at the meeting. It is usually made up of a list of items, sometimes with a time frame for each item.

Sample Agenda

ENGR 240 Team Meeting Agenda

Date:

Place and time: Members:

————————————————-

- Updates from each team member (progress) (5 min each)
- Develop work plan for upcoming week (15 min)
- Determine next meeting time (5 min)
- Work on Milestone 3 together (45 min)
- Matters arising

Minutes follow up on the agenda by recording what decisions were made and what important topics were discussed. One person is responsible for recording the events of the meeting, and distributing the minutes to each member (via email usually). That way, no one should forget what tasks they agreed to complete and when.

ENGR 240 Team Meeting Minutes

Thursday Feb, 15, 2016

Cle A035, 3:30-4:45

Present: Jaime, Chris, Renee Regrets: Joe (has the flu)

———————————————————-

- All team members have completed last week's work plan (Joe emailed a report, as she is sick)
- In the coming week, we plan to complete the following:

Task	**Who will do it?**
1. Interview Facilities Management contact	Renee
2. Research bike share programs	(Joe?)
3. Design a survey/questionnaire	Chris
4. Do a site visit	Jaime

- Next meeting: next Thursday Feb 21, after class
- Excellent progress during meeting; Joe will follow up on researching bike share programs.
- Meeting adjourned 4:50

4.5 WORK LOGS

Work logs are common documents used in the work place (and in your Co-op Work Terms) to keep track of what work is done, by whom, and how long it took. These can be very helpful for keeping a team on track and ensuring equitable workloads. To ensure accountability, have each team member sign off on the work log.

Date	Task Description	Assigned to	Status / Date Completed	Total Time Spent

Team signatures:

Name:________________________________

Name:________________________________

Name:________________________________

Name:________________________________

The next section reviews several **Models for Understanding Team Dynamics.**

4.6.1 Five Models for Understanding Team Dynamics

An important aspect of effective teamwork entails understanding group dynamics in terms of both team situation and individual temperament. This section reviews a variety models often applied in workplaces that can help a team perform optimally and manage crises effectively.

1. The Tuckman Team Model

"Tuckman's Stages of Group Development," proposed by psychologist Bruce Tuckman in 1965,1 is one of the most famous theories of team development. It describes four stages that teams may progress through: forming, storming, norming, and performing (a 5th stage was added later: adjourning). According to McCahan et al., the stages move from organizing to producing, and although the stages appear linear, in fact teams may move backwards depending on events that may influence the team and the communications strategies that they use. Some teams can also stall in a stage and never fully realize their potential. Figure 4.2.1 outlines these stages. Please refer to the McCahan et al. text2 for a more complete discussion.

Figure 4.2.1 The Stages of the Tuckman Model.

Note that at each stage, communication is a critical component of successfully moving to the next stage. The forming stage, when everyone is getting to know each other and are trying to make a good impression, is a good time to create a set of shared expectations, guidelines, or a Team Charter. A team forming activity is also a good idea to help build trust and get to know the various strengths and weaknesses of the team members. This is an orientation stage, on both an interpersonal and professional level, where preliminary boundaries and expectations are established.

The storming stage is the one most often characterized by group conflict and dysfunction. It is often where the preliminary expectations and boundaries are challenged as individuals learn more about each other's motivations. This coincides with the "brainstorming" stage of the design process, in which each member contributes ideas that could potentially become the focus of the project. It is also the stage where team mates learn about each other's' strengths and weaknesses, and try to determine what their roles will be in the project. Learning to harness the constructive potential of conflict and compromise in this stage is important to progressing to the next stage.

During the norming stage, if conflicts have been resolved and team mates have proved flexible, all is going well, each team member knows their role and works on their part of the project. Sometimes, people work independently in this stage, but check in with team mates frequently to make sure work flow is efficient and effective. Group cohesion ensures that everyone is responsible to the task and to each other. Problems might arise at this stage if teammates do not fully understand their role, the team expectations, or the overall goal; revisiting the forming or storming stage may be required.

Few first-time teams reach the performing stage, as this happens when teams have worked together well on several projects, have established a synergy, and have developed systems that that make projects go smoothly and efficiently. Less time is needed to form, storm and learn to norm; performing teams can move quickly and interdependently to tackling the task at hand. Adjourning and going their separate ways can often be somewhat emotional for these teams. Figure 4.2.24 depicts the trajectory of each team member during each stage.

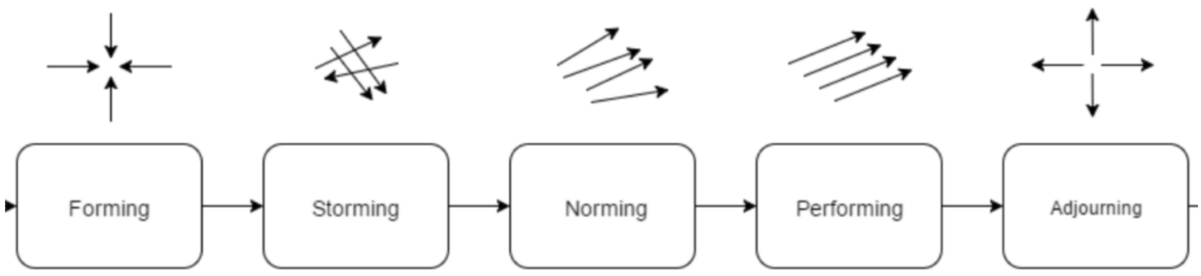


Figure 4.2.2 Trajectory of team mates during each stage of the Tuckman team formation model.

2. DISC Model

DISC theory, developed in 1928 by Dr. William Moulton Marston (who also, as it happens, created the Wonder Woman comic series!), has evolved into a useful model for conflict management as it predicts behaviours based on four key personality traits he originally described as Dominance, Inducement, Submission, and Compliance.5 The names of these four traits have been variously revised by others over the decades, so you might find different terms used in different contexts. The four general traits are now often described as (1) Dominance, (2) Influence/Inspiring(3) Steadiness/Supportive, and (4) Compliance/Conscientiousness (see Figure 4.2.3).

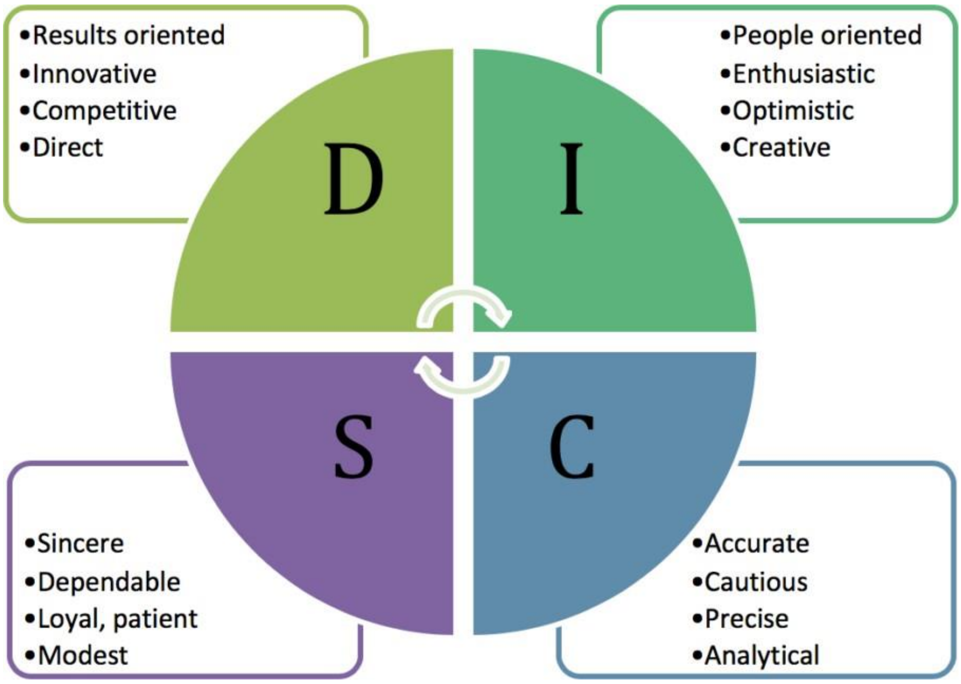


Figure 4.2.3 DISC Profile

Industries often use DISC assessments in professional contexts. Having some insight into your teammates' personality traits can help when trying to resolve conflicts. General characteristics of each trait are as follows:

- **Dominance**
  - Characteristics: direct, decisive, ego-driven, problem-solver, and risk-taker; likes new challenges and freedom from routine; driven to overcome obstacles
  - Strengths: great organizer and time manager; challenges the status quo; innovative
  - Weaknesses: can be argumentative, disrespectful of authority, and overly ambitious (taking on too much); can be blunt, stubborn, and aggressive
- **Inspiring/Influential**
  - Characteristics: enthusiastic, persuasive, optimistic, trusting, impulsive, charismatic, and emotional
  - Strengths: creative problem solver; great cheer-leader, negotiator, and peace-maker; a real "people person"

    - Weaknesses: more concerned with popularity than tangible results; lacks attention to detail
- **Steady/Supportive**
    - Characteristics: reliable, predictable, friendly, good listener, team player, empathetic, easy-going, and altruistic.
    - Strengths: dependable, loyal; respects authority; has patience and empathy; good at conflict resolution; willing to compromise.
    - Weaknesses: resistant to change; sensitive to criticism; difficulty prioritizing
- **Cautious/Conscientious/Compliant**
    - Characteristics: has high standards; values precision and accuracy; analytical and systematic; even-tempered, realistic, and logical; methodical; respect for authority
    - Strengths: great information gatherer/researcher; able to define situations precisely and accurately; offers realistic perspective
    - Weaknesses: can get bogged down in details; needs clear boundaries, procedures, and methods; difficulty accepting criticism; may avoid conflict or just "give in." May be overly timid.

3. Lencioni Model

In his 2005 book, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, Lencioni outlines five common problems teams experience that impact their effectiveness:

1. **Lack of trust:** if team members do not trust each other, they are unlikely to take risks or ask for help. A lack of trust means a low level of comfort that makes it difficult to communicate and perform effectively as a team
2. **Fear of conflict:** avoiding conflict can lead to an artificial "peace" at the expense of progress and innovation. Conflict is a normal part of team work and can be very productive if managed effectively.
3. **Lack of commitment:** team members do not commit to doing the work, do not follow through on decisions or tasks, do not meet deadlines, and let their teammates down, ultimately affecting the success of the whole project.
4. **Avoidance of accountability.**
5. **Inattention to results:** when team members focus on their own personal goals instead of project goals, they lose sight of the expected results that actually measure the success of the project. Not focusing on the results

during the process means that no one is planning how to improve those results.

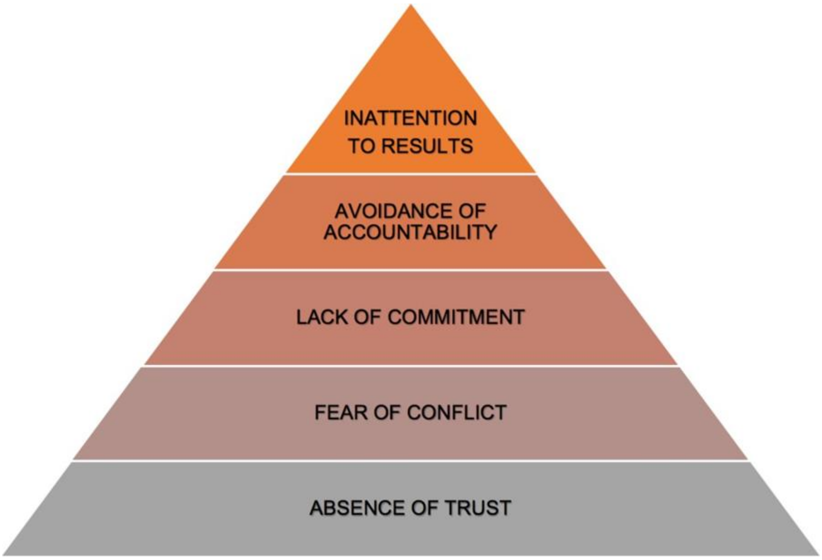


Figure 4.2.5 Lencioni Model: Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Lencioni advises tackling each dysfunction, displayed in the pyramid in Figure 4.2.5, from the bottom up. Establishing trust is a crucial first step to being able to manage conflict, achieve commitment, create accountability and focus on results.

4.6.2 Collaborative Writing

You have likely had at least one opportunity to work and write collaboratively with others, as this is an increasingly common way to work, both in school and in the workplace. The engineering design process, at least in part, entails working collaboratively to gather, organize, manage and disseminate information.This information is often carefully analyzed and used to make important decisions, so it is critical that team members collaborate effectively in managing these communications tasks.

Engineers report spending a considerable amount of their time writing, and they frequently engage in collaborative writing (CW). A recent survey asked various professionals what portion of their work week was devoted to writing, collaborative writing, and international communications.2 The results shown in Table 4.3.1 indicate that collaborative writing makes up a significant portion of overall writing tasks.

TABLE 4.3.1 Percentage of total work week that engineers and programmers report spending on communications tasks

	Engineers	Programmers
Time spent writing	35	25
Time spent planning and writing documentscollaboratively	19	12
Time spent communicating internationally (acrossnational borders)	14	18

Research has also shown that “writing in general and CW in particular have been recognized to be fundamental to most professional and academic practices in engineering.”3 Figure 4.3.1 shows that engineers rate writing skills as extremely important to career advancement.

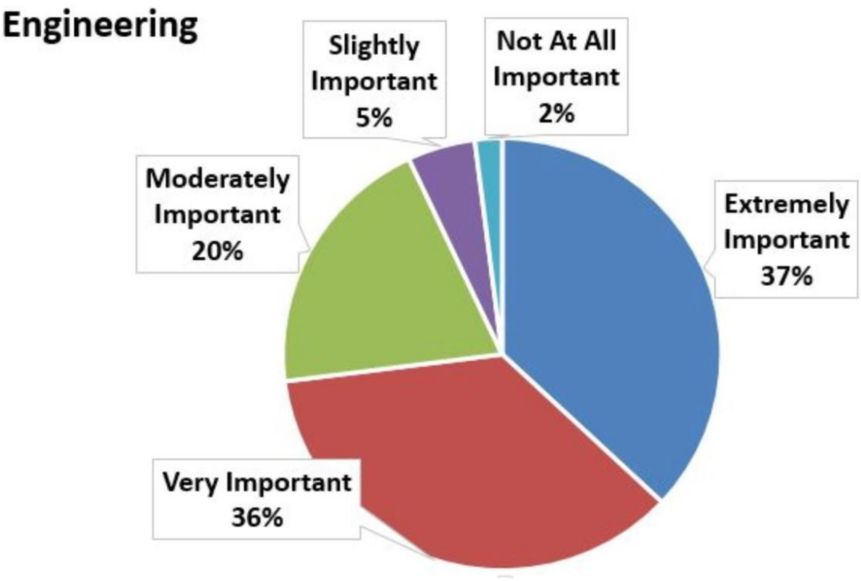


Figure 4.3.1 The importance of writing for career advancement for surveyed engineers.

Like any kind of teamwork, collaborative writing requires the entire team to be focused on a common objective; according to Lowry et al., an effective team “negotiates, coordinates, and communicates during the creation of a common document.”6 The collaborative writing process, like the Tuckman team formation model, is iterative and social, meaning the team works together and moves back and forth throughout the process.

Successful collaborative writing is made easier when you understand the different strategies you can apply, how best to control the document, and the different roles people can assume. Figure 4.3.2 outlines the various activities involved at various stages of the collaborating writing process.

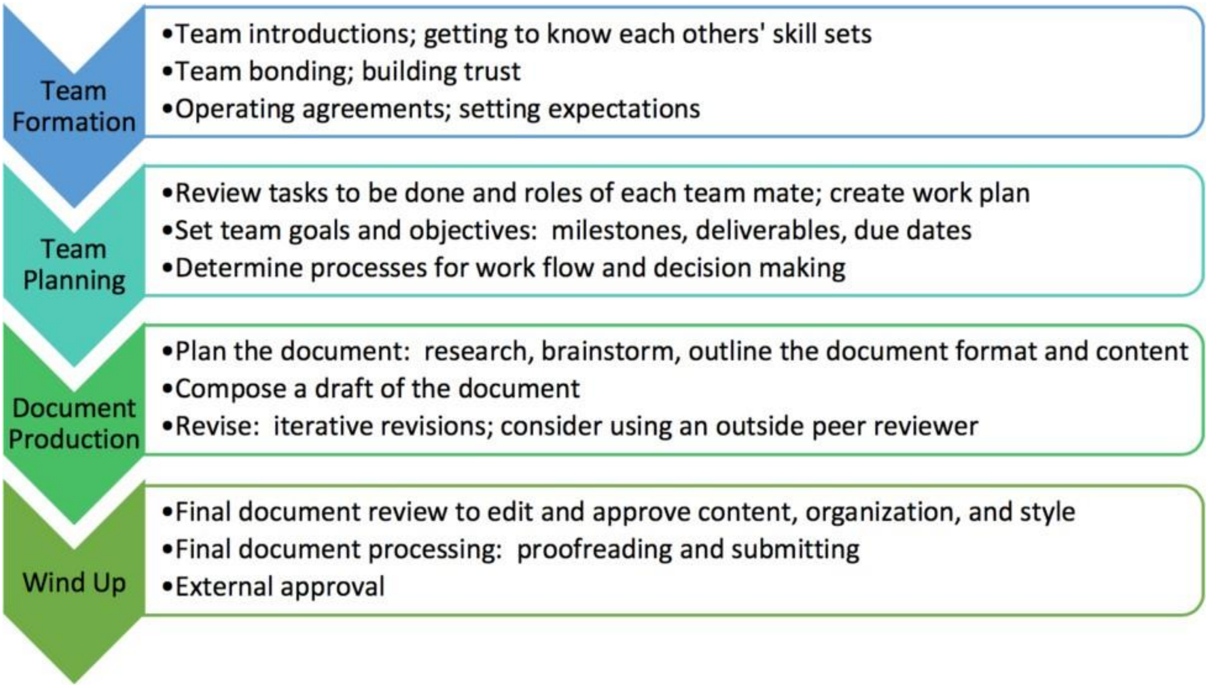


Figure 4.3.2 Collaborative writing stages [Image description]

Collaborative writing strategies are methods a team uses to coordinate the writing of a collaborative document. There are five main strategies (see Table 4.3.2), each with their advantages and disadvantages. Can you think of any other benefits or limitations?

TABLE 4.3.2 Collaborative writing strategies[7]

Writing Strategy	**When to Use**	**Pros**	**Cons**
Single-author One member writes for theentire group	For simple tasks; when littlebuy-in is needed; for small groups	Efficient; consistentstyle	May not clearly represent group's intentions; less consensus produced
Sequential Each member is in charge ofwriting a specific part and write in sequence	For asynchronous work withpoor coordination; when it's hard to meet often; for straightforward writing tasks; small groups	Easy to organize; simplifies planning	Can lose sense of group; subsequent writers may invalidate previous work; lack of consensus; version control issues

Parallel Writing: Horizontal Division Members are in charge ofwriting a specific part but write in parallel. Segmentsare distributed randomly.	When high volume of rapidoutput is needed; when software can support this strategy; for easily segmented, mildly complexwriting tasks; for groups with good structure and coordination; small to largegroups	Efficient; high volumeof output	Redundant work can beproduced; writers can be blind to each other'swork; stylistic differences; doesn't recognize individual talents well
Parallel Writing: Stratified Division Members are in charge ofwriting a specific part but write in parallel. Segmentsare distributed based on talents or skills.	For high volume rapid output; with supporting software; for complicated, difficult to segment tasks; when people have different talents/skills; for groups with good structure and coordination; small to largegroups	Efficient; high volume of quality output; betteruse of individual talent	Redundant work can beproduced; writers can be blind to each other'swork; stylistic differences; potential information overload
Reactive Writing Members create a documentin real time, while others review, react, and adjust to each other's changes and addition without much pre-planning or explicit coordination	Small groups; high levels ofcreativity; high levels of consensus on process and content	Can build creativityand consensus	Very hard to coordinate; versioncontrol issues

Document management reflects the approaches used to maintain version control of the document and describe who is responsible for it. Four main control modes are listed in **Table 4.3.3**, along with their pros and cons. Can you think of any more, based on your experience?

TABLE 4.3.3 Document control modes

Mode	Description	Pros	Cons
Centralized	When one person controls the document throughout theprocess.	Can be useful for maintaining group focus andwhen working toward a strictdeadline	Non-controlling members may feel a lack of ownershipor control of what goes into the document
Relay	When one person at a time isin charge but the control changes in the group	Democratic	Less efficient
Independent	When person maintains control of his/her assigned portion	Useful for remote teamsworking on distinct parts	Often requires an editor to pull it together; can reflect agroup that lacks agreement.

Shared	When everyone has simultaneous and equal privileges	Can be highly effective; non-threatening; good for groups working F2F, who meet frequently, who havehigh levels of trust	Can lead to conflict, especially in remote or lessfunctional groups

Roles refer to the different hats participants might wear, depending on the activity. **Table 4.3.4** describesseveral roles within a collaborative writing team. Which role(s) have you had in a group project? Are there ones you always seem to do? Ones that you prefer, dislike, or would like to try?

TABLE 4.3.4 Collaborative writing roles

Role	Description
Writer	A person who is responsible for writing a portion of the content
Consultant	A person who is external to the project and has no ownership or responsibility for producing content but who offers content and process-related feedback (peer reviewers outside the team;instructor)
Editor	A person who is responsible for the overall content production of the writers, and can makeboth style and content changes; typically has ownership of the content production
Reviewer	A person, internal or external, who provides specific content feedback but is not responsiblefor making changes
Team Leader	A person who is part of the team and may fully participate in authoring and reviewing thecontent, but who also leads the team through the processes, planning, rewarding, and motivating.
Facilitator	A person external to the team who leads the team through processes but doesn’t give contentrelated feedback.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

4.7 FURTHER READING

4.8 ASSIGNMENT

BAOU
Education for All

યુનિવર્સિટી ગીત

સ્વાધ્યાયઃ પરમં તપઃ
સ્વાધ્યાયઃ પરમં તપઃ
સ્વાધ્યાયઃ પરમં તપઃ

શિક્ષણ, સંસ્કૃતિ, સદ્‌ભાવ, દિવ્યબોધનું ધામ
ડૉ. બાબાસાહેબ આંબેડકર ઓપન યુનિવર્સિટી નામ;
સૌને સૌની પાંખ મળે, ને સૌને સૌનું આભ,
દશે દિશામાં સ્મિત વહે હો દશે દિશે શુભ-લાભ.

અભણ રહી અજ્ઞાનના શાને, અંધકારને પીવો ?
કહે બુદ્ધ આંબેડકર કહે, તું થા તારો દીવો;
શારદીય અજવાળા પહોંચ્યાં ગુર્જર ગામે ગામ
ધ્રુવ તારકની જેમ ઝળહળે એકલવ્યની શાન.

સરસ્વતીના મયૂર તમારે ફળિયે આવી ગહેકે
અંધકારને હડસેલીને ઉજાસના ફૂલ મહેંકે;
બંધન નહીં કો સ્થાન સમયના જવું ન ઘરથી દૂર
ઘર આવી મા હરે શારદા દૈન્ય તિમિરના પૂર.

સંસ્કારોની સુગંધ મહેંકે, મન મંદિરને ધામે
સુખની ટપાલ પહોંચે સૌને પોતાને સરનામે;
સમાજ કેરે દરિયે હાંકી શિક્ષણ કેરું વહાણ,
આવો કરીયે આપણ સૌ
ભવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ...
દિવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ...
ભવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ

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