

SWAMI RAMANAND TEERTHA MARATHWADA UNIVERSITY, NANDED

Four Years Multidisciplinary UG Program in Commerce (NEP 2020)

## BAHIRJI SMARAK MAHAVIDYALAYA

Basmathnagar, Dist. Hingoli

### STUDY NOTES

# BUSINESS COMMUNICATION-I

**Course Code: CCOMGE1101**

Generic / Open Elective | 2 Credits

**B.Com. First Year, Semester I (Level 4.5)**

Faculty of Commerce and Management

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BY DR NARSINGH

| Modules covered in these notes            | Hours     |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Introduction to Business Communication | 08        |
| 2. Corporate Communication Networks       | 08        |
| 3. Effective Business Communication       | 08        |
| 4. Types of Communication                 | 06        |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>30</b> |

## About the Course

### Syllabus at a glance

| Unit       | Topic                                                               | Hours     |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Introduction to Business Communication</b>                       | <b>08</b> |
| 1.1        | Introduction, definitions and nature of communication               |           |
| 1.2        | Objectives and importance of communication                          |           |
| 1.3        | Basic forms and process of communication                            |           |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Corporate Communication Networks</b>                             | <b>08</b> |
| 2.1        | Formal and informal communication networks                          |           |
| 2.2        | Barriers to communication                                           |           |
| 2.3        | Methods to improve communication                                    |           |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Effective Business Communication</b>                             | <b>08</b> |
| 3.1        | Meaning and definition of effective communication                   |           |
| 3.2        | Need and importance of effective business communication             |           |
| 3.3        | Principles of effective communication                               |           |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Types of Communication</b>                                       | <b>06</b> |
| 4.1        | Types of communication: oral and written communication              |           |
| 4.2        | Distinction between written and oral communication                  |           |
| 4.3        | Guidelines for speech, group discussion, seminar and mock interview |           |

### Course objectives

- To develop communication skills among students.
- To support personality development.
- To enhance writing, speaking and interview skills.
- To build a foundation for professional and academic communication.

### Course outcomes

| CO  | Students will be able to                                                |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CO1 | Understand and explain basic concepts and processes of communication    |
| CO2 | Identify and overcome barriers in communication                         |
| CO3 | Apply effective communication strategies in different business contexts |
| CO4 | Develop oral presentation and modern communication skills               |

### Evaluation scheme (50 marks)

| Component       | Marks | Details                                                         |
|-----------------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Two tests (CCA) | 10    | Two tests of 5 marks each covering at least 80% of the syllabus |

| Component                             | Marks     | Details                                                           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Assignment / Oral / Presentation / GD | 06        | Covers the entire syllabus                                        |
| Attendance                            | 04        | 2 marks for 60-75%, 3 marks for 75-85%, 4 marks for 85% and above |
| <b>Continuous Assessment (CCA)</b>    | <b>20</b> |                                                                   |
| <b>Semester End Assessment (SEA)</b>  | <b>30</b> | <b>Theory paper</b>                                               |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>50</b> |                                                                   |

### Semester end question paper pattern (30 marks)

- Three questions of 10 marks each have to be solved.
- **Q.1 is compulsory** and has sub-questions covering all modules (entire syllabus).
- Attempt any two questions from Q.2 to Q.5, covering all the modules.
- **Q.5 has four sub-questions**, of which any two have to be solved.

### How to use these notes

- Read each module with its tables; learn the headings and definitions, as they carry marks.
- Practise short answers in your own words and write a neat introduction and conclusion.
- Use the "Important questions" at the end of each module for revision before tests.
- Practise speech, group discussion and mock interview in class; the assignment marks come from these activities.

### Reference books (from the syllabus)

- D. D. Singhal, Business Communication, Ramesh Book Depot, Jaipur.
- Rajendra Pal, Essentials of Business Communication, Sultan Chand and Sons, New Delhi.
- Dr. P. L. Pardeshi, Communication Skills, Nirali Prakashan, Pune.
- Varinder Kumar, Business Communication, Kalyani Publishers, Ludhiana.
- H. S. Patange, Business Communication, Nikita Publication, Latur.
- C. S. Rayudu, Communication, Himalaya Publishing House, New Delhi.

# Module 1: Introduction to Business Communication

Teaching hours: 08 | Units 1.1 to 1.3

## 1.1 Introduction, Definitions and Nature of Communication

### Introduction

Every business depends on the flow of information. A manager gives instructions to staff, a salesman talks to a customer, an accountant sends a report to the owner and a company writes to the bank. All this is **communication**. A business can buy machines and hire workers, but without proper communication people do not know what to do, why to do it and how well they have done it. For this reason communication is often called the **lifeblood** of a business.

The word \*communication\* comes from the Latin word **communis**, which means "common". Communication therefore means **sharing something in common**: an idea, fact, feeling or message, between two or more persons so that it is understood in the same sense.

### Meaning of business communication

**Business communication** is the exchange of information, ideas, instructions and views between persons or groups connected with a business, in order to achieve business objectives. The persons may be inside the organisation (employees, managers, owners) or outside it (customers, suppliers, banks, government, the public).

### Definitions

- **Keith Davis:** communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another.
- **Louis Allen:** communication is the sum of all the things one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another; it involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.
- **American Management Association:** communication is any behaviour that results in an exchange of meaning.
- **Newman and Summer:** communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons.

#### Key idea for answers

Whatever definition is used, three elements are always present: **information** is passed, there is a **sender and a receiver**, and **understanding** is created. If the message is only sent but not understood, communication is not complete.

### Nature (characteristics) of communication

| Characteristic                 | Explanation                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Two or more persons</b>     | Communication needs at least a sender and a receiver. A person talking to himself is not communicating in the business sense |
| <b>Exchange of information</b> | Facts, ideas, opinions, feelings or instructions are shared                                                                  |
| <b>Mutual understanding</b>    | The aim is that the receiver understands what the sender intended                                                            |
| <b>Continuous process</b>      | Communication goes on all the time in an organisation; it never stops                                                        |
| <b>Two-way process</b>         | Effective communication includes response (feedback) from the receiver                                                       |
| <b>Dynamic</b>                 | The situation, people and mood keep changing, so the message must be adapted each time                                       |

| Characteristic               | Explanation                                                                                          |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Verbal and non-verbal</b> | Words (spoken or written) as well as gestures, tone, silence and appearance carry meaning            |
| <b>Goal oriented</b>         | Business communication always has a purpose such as selling, informing, persuading or seeking action |
| <b>Pervasive</b>             | It is found at every level and in every function of the organisation                                 |
| <b>Inevitable</b>            | One cannot avoid communicating; even silence sends a message                                         |

### Features that distinguish business communication from social communication

| Basis       | Business communication                    | Social communication                 |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Purpose     | Achieve business goals                    | Personal relationships and enjoyment |
| Language    | Formal, precise, polite                   | Informal, casual, may use slang      |
| Record      | Often written and kept as a record        | Usually oral and not recorded        |
| Structure   | Follows a prescribed format and hierarchy | No fixed format                      |
| Legal value | Letters and e-mails can be legal evidence | Normally no legal value              |

## 1.2 Objectives and Importance of Communication

### Objectives of business communication

- **To inform:** to give facts about products, prices, policies, procedures and results.
- **To instruct and direct:** managers tell employees what to do, how and when.
- **To persuade:** to influence customers to buy, or employees to accept a change.
- **To motivate:** appreciation, praise and recognition build morale.
- **To coordinate:** to bring the efforts of different departments in one direction.
- **To build goodwill:** polite and prompt communication creates a good image with customers and the public.
- **To seek and give feedback:** to know how plans are working and to correct them.
- **To maintain records:** written communication gives permanent evidence of agreements and orders.
- **To raise and settle problems:** complaints, queries and grievances are expressed and solved.

### Importance of communication

| Area                                      | How communication helps                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Smooth working of the organisation</b> | Gives clear instructions and ensures that all parts of the firm work together             |
| <b>Decision making</b>                    | Managers decide on the basis of correct and timely information                            |
| <b>Planning and control</b>               | Plans must be conveyed to those who implement them; deviations are reported and corrected |
| <b>Higher employee morale</b>             | Open communication builds trust, reduces rumours and improves job satisfaction            |
| <b>Industrial relations</b>               | Regular dialogue between management and workers avoids conflict and strikes               |
| <b>Public relations</b>                   | Press notes, advertisements and notices create a favourable image                         |
| <b>Customer service</b>                   | Quick replies to enquiries and complaints win and keep customers                          |

| Area                                 | How communication helps                                                          |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Leadership</b>                    | A leader influences followers mainly through communication                       |
| <b>Training and development</b>      | Skills and knowledge are transferred through instructions, manuals and workshops |
| <b>Facing competition and change</b> | Employees accept new methods when the reasons are explained                      |

### Importance for a commerce student

For a student of commerce, communication skills decide success in interviews, group discussions, presentations, report writing and customer dealing. Employers regularly rank communication ability among the first skills they look for. Good communication also improves personality, confidence and leadership.

## 1.3 Basic Forms and Process of Communication

### Basic forms of communication

Communication can be classified in several ways. The **basic forms** are listed below; types by medium (oral and written) are discussed in detail in Module 4.

| Basis                       | Forms                                            | Meaning                                               |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>By medium</b>            | Verbal (oral, written) and non-verbal            | Whether words or signs are used                       |
| <b>By direction</b>         | Downward, upward, horizontal (lateral), diagonal | The direction of flow in the hierarchy                |
| <b>By relationship</b>      | Formal and informal                              | Whether the official channel is followed              |
| <b>By number of persons</b> | Intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, mass        | Within oneself, between two, in groups, to the public |
| <b>By way of response</b>   | One-way and two-way                              | Whether feedback is allowed                           |

### Verbal and non-verbal communication

- **Verbal communication** uses words, spoken (conversation, telephone, meeting) or written (letter, e-mail, report).
- **Non-verbal communication** uses signs rather than words: body language (posture, gestures, eye contact, facial expression), paralanguage (tone, pitch, speed of voice), proxemics (use of space), appearance and dress, and time (punctuality).

Researchers of communication believe that a large part of the emotional meaning of a face-to-face message is carried by tone and body language rather than words. A person who says "I am happy to help" while looking away and sighing will not be believed.

### Intrapersonal, interpersonal, group and mass communication

| Form                 | Meaning                                        | Example                                       |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Intrapersonal</b> | Communication within oneself                   | Thinking about a decision, planning a speech  |
| <b>Interpersonal</b> | Between two persons                            | Manager and employee discussion; interview    |
| <b>Group</b>         | Among a small group with a common aim          | Staff meeting, committee, seminar             |
| <b>Mass</b>          | From one source to a large, scattered audience | Advertisement on TV, newspapers, social media |

## Process of communication

Communication is a **process**, a series of steps that follow one another, and it is complete only when the message is understood and a response is received. The basic elements and steps are as follows.

| Step | Element                      | Explanation                                                                                       |
|------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | <b>Sender (communicator)</b> | The person who has an idea or information to share and starts the process                         |
| 2    | <b>Idea / message</b>        | The subject matter, fact or feeling to be conveyed                                                |
| 3    | <b>Encoding</b>              | Converting the idea into words, symbols, pictures or gestures that the receiver can understand    |
| 4    | <b>Channel (medium)</b>      | The path through which the message travels: face to face, telephone, letter, e-mail, notice board |
| 5    | <b>Receiver</b>              | The person for whom the message is meant                                                          |
| 6    | <b>Decoding</b>              | The receiver reads, listens to and interprets the message to get its meaning                      |
| 7    | <b>Feedback</b>              | The receiver's response which tells the sender whether the message was understood                 |
| 8    | <b>Noise</b>                 | Any disturbance which distorts the message at any stage (see Module 2: barriers)                  |

### Flow of the process

**Sender (idea) > Encoding > Message through channel > Decoding by receiver > Feedback to sender.** Noise can enter at any stage.

## Example

The sales manager (sender) wants his team to submit the weekly report by Friday (idea). He writes the instruction in an e-mail (encoding) and sends it through the company mail system (channel). The salespersons (receivers) read and understand it (decoding) and reply "Noted, will submit by Friday" (feedback). If the mail server is down, or the manager writes "by end of week" without saying which day, noise has affected the message.

## Models in brief

- **Shannon and Weaver model:** a linear model: source, transmitter, channel, receiver, destination, with noise as a disturbance.
- **Schramm's model:** stresses that the sender and receiver must share a **field of experience** (common language and background) for the message to be understood.
- **Two-way (circular) model:** the receiver becomes the sender when he gives feedback, so roles keep changing.

## More on non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication is studied under several heads. A business person should know them because messages are formed by the whole person, not only by words.

| Head                            | Meaning                                                       | Business example                                          |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Kinesics (body language)</b> | Posture, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, handshake | A firm handshake and a smile at the start of an interview |
| <b>Paralanguage</b>             | How something is said: tone, pitch, volume, speed, pauses     | A calm, steady voice while handling an angry customer     |

| Head                             | Meaning                                                               | Business example                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Proxemics</b>                 | Use of personal space and distance                                    | Keeping a respectful distance from a senior        |
| <b>Appearance</b>                | Dress, grooming, personal presentation                                | Formal dress for a job interview or client meeting |
| <b>Chronemics</b>                | Use of time                                                           | Reaching a meeting before time shows seriousness   |
| <b>Artefacts and environment</b> | Office layout, furniture, logo, quality of stationery                 | A neat reception creates a good first impression   |
| <b>Silence</b>                   | Absence of speech, which can signal agreement, disapproval or thought | Pausing before answering a difficult question      |

### Levels of communication in an organisation

| Level               | Participants                                  | Typical content                                          |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Top level</b>    | Directors, chief executive                    | Policy, vision, strategy, annual reports                 |
| <b>Middle level</b> | Departmental managers                         | Plans, targets, coordination between departments         |
| <b>Lower level</b>  | Supervisors and workers                       | Daily instructions, work reports, problems               |
| <b>External</b>     | Customers, suppliers, bank, government, press | Quotations, orders, complaints, tax returns, press notes |

### Communication through technology

Modern business uses technology at every step: e-mail, telephone and mobile, video conferencing, WhatsApp and similar messaging applications, intranet, social media, websites and digital payment alerts. Technology increases speed and reduces cost but also creates new issues such as information overload, privacy risks, misunderstanding in short messages and less personal contact.

| Advantages of technology in communication | Problems to be careful about                         |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| High speed across any distance            | Over-dependence and lack of personal touch           |
| Low cost, especially for large audiences  | Security and leakage of confidential information     |
| Records are easy to store and search      | Technical failure and lack of skills                 |
| Allows meetings without travel            | Careless or hasty messages that cannot be taken back |

### Case study 1

#### Case

A garment shop in Basmathnagar receives a large order from a distributor. The owner phones his tailor and says "finish it quickly". The tailor understands it as "within a week", but the distributor needed it in three days. The order is delayed and the distributor cancels.

**Questions:** (a) Which principle of communication was ignored? (b) Which element of the process failed? (c) How could the owner have prevented the problem?

**Hint:** Concreteness and completeness were ignored; the message was not specific about the date. Feedback was missing, as the tailor did not repeat the deadline. The owner should have said "complete 150 shirts by Friday, 9 October, evening" and asked the tailor to confirm.

## Functions of communication in business

| Function                      | Explanation                                           | Example                                 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Informative</b>            | Supplies facts and data needed for work and decisions | Monthly sales report to the manager     |
| <b>Instructive (command)</b>  | Tells people what to do and how                       | Work order to the production supervisor |
| <b>Persuasive</b>             | Influences attitudes and actions                      | Advertisement or sales talk             |
| <b>Motivational (emotive)</b> | Expresses appreciation, feelings and encouragement    | Letter of appreciation to an employee   |
| <b>Integrative</b>            | Brings people together and builds team spirit         | Staff meeting, annual day               |
| <b>Control</b>                | Checks performance and ensures rules are followed     | Audit report, warning letter            |

## Communication and the functions of management

| Management function | Role of communication                                                                  |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Planning</b>     | Information is collected and plans are explained to those who will carry them out      |
| <b>Organising</b>   | Duties, authority and relationships are conveyed through job descriptions and charts   |
| <b>Staffing</b>     | Job advertisements, interviews, appointment letters and training involve communication |
| <b>Directing</b>    | Orders, guidance, motivation and leadership depend on communication                    |
| <b>Controlling</b>  | Reports and feedback show actual performance, which is compared with the plan          |
| <b>Coordinating</b> | Meetings and reports link the work of different departments                            |

## Qualities of a good communicator

- **Clarity of thought:** knows what he wants to say.
- **Command over language:** uses correct and suitable words.
- **Good listener:** gives full attention and respects the speaker.
- **Empathy:** understands the feelings and viewpoint of others.
- **Confidence and courtesy:** speaks politely without fear.
- **Honesty:** gives true and fair information.
- **Adaptability:** changes style according to the audience and situation.
- **Positive attitude:** looks for solutions and appreciates others.

## Seven myths about communication

| Myth                                      | Reality                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| "Communication is only speaking."         | It includes listening, writing, reading and non-verbal signs |
| "If I said it, it has been communicated." | It is complete only when it is understood                    |
| "Good communication comes naturally."     | It is a skill which can be learnt and improved               |
| "More information is always better."      | Too much information creates overload                        |

| Myth                                  | Reality                             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| "Written is always better than oral." | Both have their uses (see Module 4) |

**Important questions: Module 1**

- Define communication and explain its nature.
- Explain the objectives and importance of business communication.
- Explain the process of communication with a suitable diagram.
- Distinguish between verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Short notes: encoding and decoding, feedback, noise, mass communication.

## Module 2: Corporate Communication Networks

Teaching hours: 08 | Units 2.1 to 2.3

### 2.1 Formal and Informal Communication Networks

A **communication network** is the pattern or structure of channels through which messages flow among the members of an organisation. In a corporate setting messages travel along two kinds of networks: the **formal network** created by the organisation chart and the **informal network** created by social relations among employees.

#### A. Formal communication network

Formal communication follows the **official chain of command** laid down by the organisation. It is deliberate, usually written or recorded, and is related to the work of the business. Orders, circulars, notices, reports, minutes of meetings, memos and official e-mails are examples.

#### Directions of formal communication

| Direction                   | Meaning                                                      | Examples                                                                       | Merits and limits                                                               |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Downward</b>             | From superiors to subordinates                               | Orders, policies, circulars, job instructions, appraisal feedback              | Ensures control and clarity; may get distorted or delayed on the way down       |
| <b>Upward</b>               | From subordinates to superiors                               | Progress reports, suggestions, complaints, grievances, survey results          | Gives management feedback and builds participation; employees may hide bad news |
| <b>Horizontal (lateral)</b> | Between persons at the same level                            | Coordination meeting of the production and sales managers                      | Saves time and improves coordination; may cause rivalry if not controlled       |
| <b>Diagonal (crosswise)</b> | Between persons at different levels in different departments | A sales executive talking directly to the finance officer about a credit limit | Fast and flexible; may bypass the normal authority                              |

#### Merits and demerits of formal communication

| Merits                                        | Demerits                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Clear authority and responsibility            | Slow because of many levels              |
| Written record available for future reference | Rigid and impersonal                     |
| Fixes accountability and helps control        | Information may be filtered or distorted |
| Reduces rumours and confusion                 | Creates paperwork and cost               |

#### Formal network patterns (small group structures)

Research on small groups has described several shapes of formal networks.

| Pattern          | How it works                                               | Effect                                                      |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Chain</b>     | Message passes in a line from one person to the next       | Accurate but slow; common in hierarchies                    |
| <b>Wheel</b>     | All members communicate through one central leader         | Fast and good for routine tasks; low morale for the members |
| <b>Y pattern</b> | Two subordinates report to one person, who reports upwards | Mix of centralised and chain                                |

| Pattern                   | How it works                                          | Effect                                                           |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Circle</b>             | Each member talks only to the two persons next to him | Good morale, but slow                                            |
| <b>All-channel (star)</b> | Everyone can communicate with everyone                | Best for complex problems and high satisfaction; needs more time |

## B. Informal communication network (the grapevine)

Informal communication does not follow the official channels. It arises from **social relations** among employees: friendship, common interest, travelling together or lunch time. The informal network is popularly called the **grapevine** because it spreads in all directions like the branches of a vine. Information may be true or false, and it travels very fast, usually orally.

### Types of grapevine

| Type                     | Description                                                                                          |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Single strand</b>     | A tells B, B tells C, C tells D, and so on, in a chain                                               |
| <b>Gossip chain</b>      | One person tells many others at once                                                                 |
| <b>Probability chain</b> | A tells a few persons at random, who in turn tell some others at random                              |
| <b>Cluster chain</b>     | A tells a selected few; each of them tells a few more selected persons. This is the most common type |

### Merits and demerits of informal communication

| Merits                                       | Demerits                                |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Very fast; saves time                        | Information may be wrong or exaggerated |
| Fills gaps left by the formal network        | Spreads rumours which hurt morale       |
| Shows employees' real feelings to management | No accountability for the source        |
| Builds friendship and team spirit            | May leak confidential matters           |
| Gives emotional support                      | Can damage reputations                  |

### Formal and informal communication compared

| Basis          | Formal communication      | Informal communication                  |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Channel        | Official chain of command | Social and personal contact (grapevine) |
| Speed          | Slow                      | Very fast                               |
| Form           | Mostly written            | Mostly oral                             |
| Authenticity   | Reliable and authentic    | May be unreliable                       |
| Record         | Kept as record            | No record                               |
| Accountability | Source can be identified  | Source usually unknown                  |
| Language       | Official and polite       | Casual                                  |
| Examples       | Memo, circular, report    | Canteen talk, rumour, chat              |

### How should management handle the grapevine?

Management cannot destroy the grapevine, but can make good use of it: share accurate information quickly through official channels so that rumours have no space, listen to what the grapevine reveals about employee feelings, and develop a friendly and open climate.

## 2.2 Barriers to Communication

A **barrier** is anything that blocks, distorts or delays a message so that the receiver does not understand it as the sender intended. Barriers are also called **noise**. Business loses time, money and goodwill when barriers are not removed.

### Classification of barriers

| Group                                    | Barriers                                                                                                                  | Examples                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Semantic (language) barriers</b>   | Words having different meanings; technical jargon; poor vocabulary; ambiguity; faulty translation                         | The word "bill" may mean an invoice, a draft law or a bird's beak; using accounting jargon with a customer |
| <b>2. Physical (mechanical) barriers</b> | Noise, distance, poor equipment, bad lighting, faulty telephone line, network failure, closed doors                       | A speaker unheard in a noisy workshop; slow internet during a video call                                   |
| <b>3. Psychological barriers</b>         | Attitudes, prejudices, emotions, stress, lack of attention, poor retention, inattentive listening, premature evaluation   | A worried employee does not listen to instructions; a manager who has already formed an opinion            |
| <b>4. Organisational barriers</b>        | Complex hierarchy, rigid rules, wrong channels, information overload, status differences, poor facilities for feedback    | A message passing through many levels gets changed on the way                                              |
| <b>5. Personal barriers</b>              | Fear of authority, lack of confidence, unwillingness to share information, poor listening skill, differences in knowledge | A subordinate hesitates to report a mistake to the boss                                                    |
| <b>6. Cultural and social barriers</b>   | Different customs, values, languages, gestures and religious beliefs                                                      | A gesture that is polite in one culture may be rude in another                                             |
| <b>7. Technological barriers</b>         | Lack of skill or access to modern tools; too many channels; information overload through e-mail                           | Rural customers unable to use an online platform                                                           |

### Detailed discussion of main barriers

**Semantic barriers.** Words are only symbols and receive their meaning from the people using them. A message in difficult or unfamiliar language fails. Ambiguous sentences such as "The manager told the clerk that he must leave" leave doubt about who must leave. Technical terms are clear to experts but confusing to others.

**Psychological barriers.** The state of mind of the sender and receiver strongly affects the message. An angry or anxious person will not listen properly. Prejudice towards the sender causes the receiver to reject even good advice. Selective perception means that people hear only what they want to hear. Inattention is a major cause of misunderstanding.

**Organisational barriers.** In a tall organisation a message passes through many people, and at every level it may be shortened, changed or delayed. Rigid rules about whom one may speak to discourage free flow. Too much information (overload) causes important messages to be ignored.

**Physical barriers.** Poor acoustics, background noise, distance between the offices and defective equipment prevent the message from reaching the receiver clearly.

**Cultural barriers.** In a business that deals with people of different regions or countries, language, dress, greeting styles and attitudes towards time and hierarchy create misunderstandings.

### Effects of barriers

Delay and wastage of time; wrong decisions; loss of customers and orders; low morale and conflict among staff; increase in cost and mistakes.

## 2.3 Methods to Improve Communication

Barriers can be reduced or removed through conscious effort by both sender and receiver, and by the management of the organisation.

### Measures by the sender

- **Clarify the idea** before communicating; know what exactly has to be said and why.
- **Use simple, clear and familiar language**; avoid jargon, slang and ambiguity.
- **Choose the right medium and time** according to the urgency, cost and confidentiality of the message.
- **Consider the receiver's viewpoint**, knowledge and background (the "you attitude").
- **Be brief but complete**; avoid too much information at one time.
- **Ensure that words and body language match** the message.
- **Seek feedback** and be ready to repeat or explain.

### Measures by the receiver

- **Listen attentively** and do not interrupt or judge too soon.
- **Ask questions** to clear doubts; summarise what was understood.
- **Control emotions** and avoid prejudice about the speaker.
- **Give prompt and honest feedback.**

### Measures by the organisation

| Method                                   | How it improves communication                                                  |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Open-door policy                         | Employees can meet managers freely                                             |
| Suggestion boxes and grievance procedure | Encourage upward communication                                                 |
| Reduce the levels of hierarchy           | Shortens the path of messages and reduces distortion                           |
| Regular meetings and briefings           | Keep everyone informed and encourage discussion                                |
| Use of modern technology                 | E-mail, intranet, video conferencing, messaging applications speed up the flow |
| Training in communication skills         | Workshops on listening, speaking, writing                                      |
| Using multiple channels                  | Important messages are repeated in writing and orally                          |
| Clear policies and job descriptions      | Everyone knows whom to communicate with                                        |
| House magazine and notice boards         | Spread official news and reduce rumours                                        |
| Check feedback regularly                 | Surveys and review meetings confirm that the message has been understood       |

## The art of listening

Listening is a major part of communication. Hearing is physical, while **listening** is the mental effort to understand. Poor listeners lose important information. Ways to become a better listener: face the speaker and keep eye contact; do not interrupt; take brief notes; avoid distractions; show interest by nodding; paraphrase what was said; and ask questions at the proper time.

### Case study 2: formal network and grapevine

#### Case

A company announces a transfer policy through a notice board but does not explain the reasons. Within hours employees spread a rumour that the factory will be closed. Production falls and some skilled workers start looking for other jobs.

**Questions:** (a) Which type of communication caused the problem? (b) What was the failure of the formal communication? (c) Suggest corrective action.

**Hint:** The grapevine spread the rumour because official information was incomplete. Management should call a meeting, explain the policy clearly, answer questions and use a circular and a notice board to confirm the facts.

## Types of listening

| Type                           | Meaning                                             | Use                                        |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Appreciative listening</b>  | Listening for enjoyment                             | Music, a motivational speech               |
| <b>Informational listening</b> | Listening to learn facts                            | Lecture, training session, instructions    |
| <b>Critical listening</b>      | Listening to judge and evaluate the message         | Sales presentation, negotiation            |
| <b>Empathetic listening</b>    | Listening to understand the feelings of the speaker | Handling a complaint or a personal problem |

## Barriers to listening

- Distractions in the surroundings or in one's own mind.
- Preparing a reply while the speaker is still speaking.
- Prejudice about the speaker or the topic.
- Tiredness, illness or hurry.
- Difficult accent or poor voice of the speaker.

## Barrier and remedy at a glance

| Barrier                              | Remedy                                                                |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Use of jargon and difficult language | Use simple words; define technical terms                              |
| Noise and poor equipment             | Select a quiet place; maintain equipment; test links before a meeting |
| Emotions and bias                    | Pause, control emotions, listen with an open mind                     |
| Many levels of hierarchy             | Reduce levels; use direct channels and technology                     |
| Information overload                 | Send only needed information; give priority and summaries             |
| Cultural differences                 | Learn about customs; avoid stereotypes; use neutral language          |

| Barrier     | Remedy                                         |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------|
| No feedback | Ask questions, use surveys and review meetings |

### Example: applying the methods

A bank manager finds that customers often misunderstand the instructions for an online form. He (a) rewrites the instructions in simple English and Marathi, (b) puts a help-desk employee near the entrance, (c) displays a short video on the screen, and (d) asks customers to give feedback. By using several channels and feedback, he has removed semantic, physical and psychological barriers at the same time.

### Communication climate

An organisation's **communication climate** means the general atmosphere of openness and trust in which messages are shared. In a supportive climate, employees are not afraid to ask questions or report errors, managers listen, and information flows freely. Such a climate is built through respect, transparency, regular dialogue and recognition of good work.

### Barriers in the Indian business context

Indian business offices and markets are multilingual. A shopkeeper may speak Marathi, Hindi and some English in the same day. A written notice in English only may not reach all customers, and a spoken instruction in a dialect may not be understood by a visitor from another state. Therefore language choice itself is a communication decision. Other common Indian barriers include respect for seniority that prevents juniors from raising doubts, over-reliance on oral instructions without written confirmation, and uneven access to the internet and digital skills.

### Choosing the right channel to reduce barriers

| Situation                     | Better channel                     | Reason                           |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Urgent, short message         | Telephone or messaging application | Fast and allows a quick response |
| Complex or legal matter       | Letter or e-mail with attachments  | Gives details and a record       |
| Sensitive or emotional matter | Face-to-face meeting               | Tone and body language show care |
| Message for many persons      | Circular, notice, group mail       | Same message reaches all         |
| Training and explanation      | Demonstration, workshop, video     | Shows how and permits questions  |

### Communication in the digital age

Intranet portals, instant messaging groups and video meetings have created **new networks** in which hierarchy is less visible and any employee can reach any other. These networks give speed but also need discipline: messages should be professional, confidential matters should not be shared in open groups, and important decisions must still be confirmed in writing.

### Important questions: Module 2

- Explain formal and informal communication networks. Distinguish between them.
- Explain the directions of formal communication with examples.
- What is grapevine? Explain its types, merits and demerits.
- Discuss the various barriers to communication and suggest measures to overcome them.
- Explain the methods to improve communication in an organisation.

## Module 3: Effective Business Communication

Teaching hours: 08 | Units 3.1 to 3.3

### 3.1 Meaning and Definition of Effective Communication

Communication is **effective** when the receiver understands the message in the same sense in which the sender intended it, and responds in the desired manner, at the lowest cost and in the shortest time. Merely sending a message is not enough; the test of communication is **what the receiver understands and does**.

#### Definition

Effective business communication is the process of sending a clear, complete and courteous message through a suitable channel at the right time, so that it is correctly understood by the receiver and produces the intended response and goodwill.

#### Features of effective communication

- **Clarity:** the message has only one possible meaning.
- **Completeness:** all facts required for action are included.
- **Receiver oriented:** it is written or spoken keeping the receiver in mind.
- **Two-way:** it provides for feedback.
- **Economy:** it saves the time, money and effort of both parties.
- **Purposeful:** it leads to action or understanding.
- **Goodwill building:** tone is polite and positive.

#### Effective and ineffective communication compared

| Effective communication           | Ineffective communication                  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Message is understood as intended | Message is misunderstood or not understood |
| Right medium and timing           | Wrong medium or late                       |
| Polite and positive tone          | Rude, negative or confusing tone           |
| Feedback taken                    | No feedback                                |
| Leads to action and goodwill      | Leads to delay, error and complaints       |

### 3.2 Need and Importance of Effective Business Communication

#### Need

In today's competitive and technology-driven market, the need for effective communication has grown for several reasons: businesses are larger and spread over many locations; customers have many choices; employees come from different backgrounds; and decisions have to be taken quickly based on information. Poor communication is a common cause of failure in teams, projects and customer relationships.

#### Importance

| Area                               | Importance of effective communication                                       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Achievement of objectives</b>   | Plans and goals reach everyone clearly, and effort is coordinated           |
| <b>Management functions</b>        | Planning, organising, directing and controlling all depend on communication |
| <b>Quick and correct decisions</b> | Accurate and timely information reduces mistakes                            |
| <b>Efficiency and productivity</b> | Employees who understand their tasks work faster with fewer errors          |

| Area                  | Importance of effective communication                                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Good relations        | Builds trust among employees, managers, customers, suppliers and investors |
| Customer satisfaction | Clear product information and quick complaint handling retain customers    |
| Sales promotion       | Persuasive messages and advertisements increase sales                      |
| Reduces conflict      | Misunderstandings are cleared quickly                                      |
| Corporate image       | Courteous and professional communication adds to reputation                |
| Career growth         | Persons who communicate well are more likely to be selected and promoted   |
| Saves cost            | Prevents wrong supplies, repeated work and legal disputes                  |

### Role in modern business

With e-commerce, social media, video conferencing and messaging applications, business messages travel instantly across the world. This increases the need for **clarity, politeness and professionalism**, because a careless message can reach thousands and cause lasting damage to the reputation of a firm.

### 3.3 Principles of Effective Communication

The principles of effective communication are guidelines which, if followed, make a message successful. They are popularly known as the **Seven Cs** of communication (some authors add more).

| Principle        | Meaning                                                                                        | How to apply                                                                                     |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Clarity       | The message should be clear, so that the receiver understands exactly what the sender means    | One main idea at a time; simple words; short sentences; avoid ambiguity and jargon               |
| 2. Conciseness   | Say what is needed in the fewest words without losing completeness                             | Avoid repetition and unnecessary details; use "now" instead of "at this point in time"           |
| 3. Concreteness  | The message should be specific, definite and supported by facts and figures                    | Use exact dates, amounts and examples: "Deliver 200 units by 15 March" instead of "Deliver soon" |
| 4. Correctness   | Facts, figures, grammar, spelling and format must be accurate                                  | Check names, numbers and punctuation; use correct tone for the level of the receiver             |
| 5. Completeness  | The message contains all the information the receiver needs to act                             | Answer who, what, when, where, why and how                                                       |
| 6. Consideration | The message is prepared keeping the receiver's needs and feelings in mind (the "you attitude") | Use positive words; show respect; stress benefits to the receiver                                |
| 7. Courtesy      | The message should be polite, honest and respectful                                            | Use "please" and "thank you"; reply promptly; avoid anger                                        |

### Other important principles

- **Candour (honesty):** tell the truth and avoid misleading statements.
- **Timeliness:** a message must reach in time; a correct message that comes late is useless.
- **Appropriate medium:** use the medium that suits the content, urgency and cost.
- **Feedback:** provide for response so that misunderstanding is removed.
- **Attention:** the message should attract and hold the attention of the receiver.
- **Informality where suitable:** a friendly style reduces distance between sender and receiver.
- **Integrity:** words should match actions.

## Illustration of clarity and conciseness

| Poor message                                                                                                                              | Improved message                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "We are in receipt of your letter of the 5th ultimo and wish to state that we are in a position to supply the goods as soon as possible." | "Thank you for your letter of 5 March. We will supply the goods by 20 March."                                         |
| "Please come to the office at your earliest convenience."                                                                                 | "Please meet me at my office at 11 a.m. on Monday, 12 October."                                                       |
| "The stuff that you ordered is pending due to some issue."                                                                                | "Your order for 50 registers is delayed because the paper stock has not arrived. It will be delivered on 18 October." |

## Communication strategies for different business contexts

Effective communication is not the same everywhere. The message, tone and channel should change with the person and the situation.

| Context                          | Suitable strategy                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>With customers</b>            | Be polite and prompt; listen to the need; give accurate product information; handle complaints calmly; follow up            |
| <b>With employees</b>            | Give clear instructions; explain the reason for decisions; praise in public and criticise in private; encourage suggestions |
| <b>With superiors</b>            | Be respectful and brief; present facts and options; report problems early with a possible solution                          |
| <b>With suppliers</b>            | Be specific about quantity, quality, price and date; confirm orders in writing                                              |
| <b>With banks and government</b> | Use formal language and the correct format; attach documents; keep copies; meet deadlines                                   |
| <b>In meetings</b>               | Prepare an agenda; start and end on time; allow everyone to speak; record minutes                                           |
| <b>In negotiations</b>           | Prepare facts; listen carefully; keep a friendly tone; look for a result useful to both sides                               |
| <b>In a crisis</b>               | Communicate quickly, honestly and consistently; name one spokesperson                                                       |

## E-mail etiquette

The e-mail is the most widely used written medium in business. A professional e-mail should be short, correct and courteous.

- Write a **clear subject line** (for example "Request for leave on 12 October").
- Begin with a proper greeting: "Dear Sir/Madam" or "Dear Mr. Patil".
- State the purpose in the **first two lines**; keep paragraphs short.
- Use correct language and avoid slang, capital letters for whole sentences, and too many emoticons.
- Check the recipients; use "Cc" for information and "Bcc" for hidden copies with care.
- Attach files properly and mention them in the text.
- Close politely: "Thank you" or "Yours sincerely", followed by your name and contact details.
- Read once again for mistakes before sending; do not write when angry.

## Sample professional e-mail

### Subject: Request for the quotation of 50 office registers

Dear Sir,

We are a stationery retailer in Basmathnagar. Please send us your quotation for 50 office registers (200 pages, A4 size), with price, delivery period and payment terms. We need the supply by 20 October 2026. We look forward to your reply by 12 October.

Yours sincerely, (Name), (Phone number)

## Telephone etiquette

- Answer promptly (within three rings) and greet: "Good morning, Sai Traders, how may I help you?"
- Speak clearly in a friendly, calm tone; smile, because it can be heard.
- Listen carefully; note down the name and number of the caller.
- Do not keep the caller waiting; ask permission before putting a call on hold.
- Repeat important details to confirm.
- End politely and let the caller hang up first where suitable.

## Barriers to effectiveness that arise from poor principles

| Principle ignored | Result                  | Example                              |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Clarity           | Confusion and mistakes  | "Send the goods soon" without a date |
| Completeness      | Delay and extra letters | Order without size or colour         |
| Correctness       | Loss and embarrassment  | Wrong amount in an invoice           |
| Courtesy          | Loss of goodwill        | Rude reply to a complaint            |
| Consideration     | Customer feels ignored  | Only stressing "our" point of view   |

## You-attitude and positive language

| Negative / me-attitude                          | Positive / you-attitude                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "We cannot supply the goods before 20 October." | "We shall be glad to supply the goods from 20 October."                  |
| "You failed to fill the form properly."         | "Please fill in the missing details in the form so that we can proceed." |
| "We do not accept returns after a week."        | "Goods can be returned within a week of purchase."                       |

## Steps in preparing an effective message

| Step | Action                            | Question to ask                                                   |
|------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | <b>Define the purpose</b>         | Why am I communicating: to inform, request, persuade or instruct? |
| 2    | <b>Analyse the receiver</b>       | Who is he? What does he know? How will he react?                  |
| 3    | <b>Collect and organise facts</b> | Have I the five Ws (who, what, when, where, why) and how?         |
| 4    | <b>Select the channel</b>         | Is oral or written better? What about cost, speed, record?        |
| 5    | <b>Draft the message</b>          | Is it clear, concise and courteous?                               |
| 6    | <b>Review and revise</b>          | Are facts, spelling and tone correct?                             |

| Step | Action                    | Question to ask                                                |
|------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7    | <b>Send and follow up</b> | Did the receiver understand and act? Have I obtained feedback? |

### Factors for selecting a channel

- **Urgency:** a fast channel for urgent matter.
- **Cost:** the cheapest channel that meets the purpose.
- **Need of record:** use writing for orders, agreements and complaints.
- **Confidentiality:** private matters need a personal meeting or a sealed document.
- **Number of receivers:** group mail or a circular for many persons.
- **Complexity:** use writing and visuals for complicated data.
- **Receiver's ability:** consider language, literacy and access to technology.

### Exercise: rewrite the sentence

| Original sentence                                                              | Principle    | Rewritten                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "We shall send the stuff in due course."                                       | Concreteness | "We shall send the 40 cartons on 22 October."                                 |
| "Because of the fact that the machine is not working, production has stopped." | Conciseness  | "Production has stopped because the machine is not working."                  |
| "Your payment is overdue, you must pay now."                                   | Courtesy     | "May we remind you that payment of Rs. 5,000 is due. Kindly arrange it soon." |
| "Revert back ASAP."                                                            | Clarity      | "Please reply by Friday, 9 October."                                          |

### Important questions: Module 3

- What is effective communication? Explain its need and importance.
- Explain the principles (7 Cs) of effective communication with examples.
- Why is clarity important in business communication?
- Short notes: you-attitude, courtesy, conciseness, concreteness.

## Module 4: Types of Communication

Teaching hours: 06 | Units 4.1 to 4.3

### 4.1 Types of Communication: Oral and Written

#### Oral communication

Oral communication means exchange of ideas through **spoken words**. It may be face to face or through a medium such as telephone, video call, intercom or public address system. It is the most common form of communication in business.

- **Forms:** conversation, interview, meeting, conference, speech, presentation, group discussion, seminar, telephone call, voice message.

| Advantages of oral communication                   | Limitations of oral communication                              |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Quick and immediate response                       | No permanent record unless recorded                            |
| Personal touch; tone and body language add meaning | Difficult to use for long or complicated details               |
| Saves time and cost for short messages             | Speaker may forget or say something in haste                   |
| Allows clarification of doubts at once             | Not suitable if the parties are far apart (without technology) |
| Builds friendly relations and persuades well       | Cannot be used as legal proof easily                           |

#### Written communication

Written communication uses **written or printed words**. It includes letters, e-mails, memos, circulars, notices, reports, manuals, minutes, advertisements, websites and social media posts.

| Advantages of written communication                         | Limitations of written communication               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Permanent record; useful for reference and legal proof      | Time consuming to prepare                          |
| Can be edited and revised before sending                    | No immediate feedback                              |
| Suitable for long and complicated matters                   | Costly in paper, printing and postage              |
| Reaches many persons uniformly                              | May be misunderstood without tone or body language |
| Lack of personal touch is less important for formal matters | Writing and reading skills required                |

### 4.2 Distinction Between Written and Oral Communication

| Basis       | Oral communication                         | Written communication              |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Medium      | Spoken words                               | Written or printed words           |
| Speed       | Quick                                      | Slower                             |
| Feedback    | Immediate                                  | Delayed                            |
| Record      | No record unless recorded                  | Permanent record                   |
| Legal value | Weak                                       | Strong evidence                    |
| Cost        | Low for short messages                     | Higher (paper, time)               |
| Language    | Informal, flexible; may repeat or rephrase | Formal, careful and well organised |

| Basis          | Oral communication                     | Written communication                     |
|----------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Clarity        | Doubts can be removed on the spot      | Cannot be clarified at once               |
| Personal touch | High because of voice and expression   | Low                                       |
| Suitable for   | Short, urgent and confidential matters | Long, complex, formal matters and records |
| Examples       | Interview, meeting, telephone          | Letter, report, e-mail                    |

**Conclusion.** Neither form is better in all situations. A good communicator uses oral communication to discuss and persuade and then confirms important points in writing.

### 4.3 Guidelines for Speech, Group Discussion, Seminar and Mock Interview

#### A. Guidelines for a speech

A speech is a formal oral presentation to an audience. Success depends on preparation, organisation and delivery.

| Stage                       | Guidelines                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Preparation</b>          | Know the purpose, the audience and the time available. Collect facts and examples. Prepare brief notes or key points; do not memorise the whole speech                                                |
| <b>Structure</b>            | <b>Opening</b> (greeting and an interesting start such as a question or a short story); <b>body</b> (two or three main points with examples); <b>conclusion</b> (summary and a clear closing message) |
| <b>Language</b>             | Simple, direct and correct. Short sentences. Avoid difficult words and slang                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Voice</b>                | Clear pronunciation, proper volume, moderate speed, pauses for emphasis, variation in pitch                                                                                                           |
| <b>Body language</b>        | Stand straight, keep eye contact with the audience, natural gestures, a pleasant face                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Time</b>                 | Finish within the time limit; practise before a friend or a mirror                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Handling nervousness</b> | Take deep breaths, begin slowly, expect a little nervousness and treat it as energy                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Audience</b>             | Watch audience reaction, use humour carefully, thank the audience at the end                                                                                                                          |

#### B. Guidelines for group discussion (GD)

A **group discussion** is an exchange of views among a group of persons on a given topic, in which each member speaks and listens. Colleges and employers use GD to test communication, knowledge, leadership and teamwork.

- **Listen carefully** to the topic and to others; understand the topic before speaking.
- **Start well:** if you know the topic, begin with a definition or a short, clear point; initiation gives a good impression, but do not start if you are not sure.
- **Speak clearly and politely;** avoid shouting and personal attacks. Disagree with the idea and not the person.
- **Support points with facts, figures and examples;** keep them brief.
- **Give others a chance:** do not interrupt or dominate. If someone is silent, invite his opinion.
- **Be positive and open to other views;** accept good points from others.
- **Maintain eye contact** with all group members, not only the one who spoke last.
- **Do not repeat** points already made; add something new or summarise.
- **Conclude** if time permits, by briefly summarising the main points raised.

- **Keep to the topic** and to the time.

| Do                            | Do not                                    |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Be well informed and prepared | Interrupt or shout at others              |
| Be polite and respectful      | Dominate the discussion                   |
| Use simple language           | Be silent throughout                      |
| Support ideas with examples   | Get angry or make personal remarks        |
| Show team spirit              | Leave the topic or give irrelevant matter |

### C. Guidelines for a seminar

A **seminar** is a meeting for the study and discussion of a particular subject, in which one or more persons present a paper or talk and the participants discuss it. It is often organised in colleges and professional bodies.

- **Choose a topic** which is relevant and manageable; collect material from books, journals and reliable websites.
- **Prepare the paper:** introduction, main discussion with subheadings, conclusion and references.
- **Use visual aids** such as slides, charts and handouts to make the presentation interesting. Keep slides short with few points.
- **Present, do not read:** speak to the audience and refer to notes only briefly.
- **Follow the time limit** given by the organisers.
- **Invite questions** and answer them politely; if you do not know an answer, say so honestly.
- **As a participant**, listen carefully, take notes and ask relevant questions respectfully.
- **As a chairperson**, introduce the speaker, control time and sum up the discussion.

### D. Guidelines for a mock interview

A **mock interview** is a practice interview arranged to prepare a candidate for a real interview. A mock interview gives experience and feedback on content, language and behaviour.

#### Before the interview

- Study the **job profile** and the organisation.
- Prepare a short **self-introduction** (education, skills, achievements, interests).
- Keep your **resume and certificates** in order.
- Prepare answers to common questions and practise aloud.
- Dress in neat formal clothes; reach **before time**.

#### During the interview

- Greet the panel, wait to be asked to sit, and thank them.
- Sit straight; keep eye contact; speak clearly and with confidence.
- Listen to the full question before answering; give honest, short and relevant answers.
- Do not argue; accept that you do not know if that is true.
- Show interest in the job; ask one or two good questions at the end.
- Thank the panel and leave politely.

#### After the mock interview

Take feedback on content, language, voice and body language, and work on the weak areas.

## Common interview questions with approach

| Question                                     | Approach                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "Tell us about yourself."                    | Give a 1-minute summary: name, education, skills, a strength, and your goal |
| "Why should we hire you?"                    | Link your skills to the needs of the job with one example                   |
| "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"    | Give real strengths with proof; mention a weakness you are improving        |
| "Where do you see yourself in five years?"   | Show realistic ambition connected to the organisation                       |
| "Why do you want to join this organisation?" | Show that you have studied the organisation                                 |

## Evaluation checklist for a mock interview

| Criteria          | What is observed                        |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Subject knowledge | Correctness and depth of answers        |
| Communication     | Clarity, fluency, vocabulary, listening |
| Body language     | Posture, eye contact, gestures, dress   |
| Confidence        | Calmness and courage in answering       |
| Attitude          | Politeness, honesty, enthusiasm         |

## Oral presentation skills

An **oral presentation** is a planned, structured talk before an audience, usually supported by slides. Business students are expected to present project reports, proposals and results.

| Stage                   | What to do                                                                                          |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Plan</b>             | Fix the purpose, audience and time; select 3 to 5 main points                                       |
| <b>Prepare slides</b>   | One idea per slide; 4 to 6 short lines; large font; good contrast; use charts instead of long text  |
| <b>Structure</b>        | Introduction (tell them what you will tell), body (tell them), conclusion (tell them what you told) |
| <b>Rehearse</b>         | Practise aloud, check timing and the working of equipment                                           |
| <b>Deliver</b>          | Face the audience, speak clearly, use pauses, do not read the slides                                |
| <b>Handle questions</b> | Listen fully, repeat the question, answer briefly, admit when you do not know                       |

## Sample speech outline: "Importance of communication skills for a commerce student"

- **Opening:** "Good morning everyone. Imagine a brilliant student who cannot explain his idea to an employer. What will happen?"
- **Point 1:** Employers look for communication skills first.
- **Point 2:** Communication helps in interviews, presentations and customer dealing.
- **Point 3:** Skills can be developed through reading, listening, writing and practice.
- **Conclusion:** "Knowledge becomes powerful only when we can share it. Let us start practising today. Thank you."

**Sample group discussion: "Digital payments are better than cash"**

| Points in favour                            | Points against                      |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Safe, no risk of carrying cash              | Digital divide in rural areas       |
| Fast and convenient                         | Online fraud and lack of awareness  |
| Transparent records help tax and accounting | Dependence on internet and power    |
| Reduces cost of handling cash               | Fees and difficulty for the elderly |

**Possible conclusion:** Digital payments are the future, but training, security and network facilities must grow along with them.

**Sample mock interview dialogue**

| Panel                                                  | Candidate                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Good morning. Please sit down. Tell us about yourself. | Good morning, sir. Thank you. I am Rohit Pawar, a B.Com. student. I am good at accounts and communication. I led my college's quiz team. I wish to start a career in accounting. |
| Why do you want to join our firm?                      | Your firm is known for ethical work and training of freshers. I would like to learn and also contribute.                                                                         |
| What is your weakness?                                 | I used to hesitate to speak before a large audience. I have been practising in class presentations and it is improving.                                                          |
| Do you have any questions for us?                      | Yes, sir. What kind of training will be given to new joiners? Thank you for your time.                                                                                           |

**Sample self-introduction (for interview)**

"Good morning. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I have completed my 12th from \_\_\_\_\_ and am pursuing B.Com. at Bahirji Smarak Mahavidyalaya, Basmathnagar. My strengths are accounting, teamwork and punctuality. I have participated in \_\_\_\_\_ (activity). My short term goal is to build my skills, and my long term goal is to grow into a responsible professional. Thank you."

**Seminar paper: suggested structure**

| Part            | Content                                  |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------|
| Title page      | Title, name, class, date                 |
| Abstract        | 3 to 4 lines about the content           |
| Introduction    | Background and objective                 |
| Main discussion | Headings with facts, charts and examples |
| Conclusion      | Findings and suggestions                 |
| References      | Books, journals, websites used           |

**Role of body language in all four activities**

| Activity | Positive body language                         | Avoid                                           |
|----------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Speech   | Upright posture, eye contact, natural gestures | Hands in pockets, swaying, looking at the floor |

| Activity         | Positive body language                                 | Avoid                                   |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Group discussion | Leaning slightly forward, nodding, looking at everyone | Pointing fingers, crossed arms          |
| Seminar          | Facing audience, using pointer calmly                  | Turning back to the screen              |
| Interview        | Firm handshake, sitting straight, smile                | Fidgeting, chewing, checking the mobile |

### Choosing between oral and written communication

| Situation                                  | Choice                           | Reason                                     |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Placing a large order with a supplier      | Written                          | Needs a record of quantity, price and date |
| Telling a colleague about a meeting change | Oral                             | Quick and informal                         |
| Disciplinary action against an employee    | Written, with a personal meeting | Needs evidence and fairness                |
| Appreciating an employee's work            | Oral and written                 | Personal praise followed by a letter       |
| Giving a complaint to a bank               | Written                          | Proof of the complaint and date            |
| Negotiating prices with a customer         | Oral                             | Flexibility and persuasion                 |

### Video conferencing guidelines

- Check internet, camera and microphone **before** the meeting.
- Join on time, sit in a quiet, well-lit place with a plain background.
- Keep yourself on mute when not speaking; raise the hand feature to speak.
- Look at the camera while speaking; dress as for a face-to-face meeting.
- Share the agenda and documents in advance; summarise decisions at the end.

### Tips for building confidence in speaking

- Read newspapers and good books daily to enrich vocabulary and knowledge.
- Speak a few minutes in English or Marathi on a topic every day before a mirror.
- Record your voice and listen for mistakes.
- Take part in class discussions, debates and elocution competitions.
- Accept feedback as help and not as criticism.

### Important questions: Module 4

- Explain oral and written communication with merits and demerits.
- Distinguish between written and oral communication.
- Write guidelines for a good speech / group discussion / seminar / mock interview.
- Short notes: body language in interview, handling nervousness, visual aids.

## Revision Section

*Quick facts, glossary and model question paper*

### Glossary of key terms

| Term                   | Meaning                                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Communication          | Sharing of information and understanding between persons |
| Encoding               | Putting an idea into words or symbols                    |
| Decoding               | Interpreting the message received                        |
| Feedback               | Response of the receiver to the message                  |
| Noise                  | Anything that disturbs or distorts the message           |
| Channel                | The path or medium through which the message travels     |
| Grapevine              | Informal network of communication in an organisation     |
| Downward communication | Flow of messages from superiors to subordinates          |
| Upward communication   | Flow of messages from subordinates to superiors          |
| Barrier                | Obstacle that prevents proper understanding              |
| Semantic barrier       | Obstacle arising from the meaning of words               |
| Kinesics               | Study of body movements and gestures                     |
| You-attitude           | Writing from the receiver's point of view                |
| Group discussion       | Structured exchange of views by a group on a topic       |
| Mock interview         | Practice interview for training                          |

### Choose the correct option: practice questions

| No. | Question                                                                                       | Answer                   |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1   | The word "communication" comes from the Latin word communis meaning                            | Common                   |
| 2   | Disturbance in the process of communication is called                                          | Noise                    |
| 3   | Response of the receiver is known as                                                           | Feedback                 |
| 4   | Which communication follows the official chain of command?                                     | Formal                   |
| 5   | The grapevine is a form of                                                                     | Informal communication   |
| 6   | Communication between persons of the same level is                                             | Horizontal               |
| 7   | Converting an idea into words or symbols is                                                    | Encoding                 |
| 8   | The 7 Cs include clarity, concreteness, correctness, completeness, consideration, courtesy and | Conciseness              |
| 9   | Which type has immediate feedback?                                                             | Oral communication       |
| 10  | Which has more legal value?                                                                    | Written communication    |
| 11  | Body language is a form of                                                                     | Non-verbal communication |
| 12  | A planned practice interview is a                                                              | Mock interview           |

## Model question paper (30 marks)

**Q.1 (compulsory, 10 marks).** Answer the following in brief. (a) Define communication. (b) What is feedback? (c) Name the types of grapevine. (d) State the seven Cs. (e) Write two differences between oral and written communication.

**Q.2 (10 marks).** Explain the process of communication with a diagram.

**Q.3 (10 marks).** Discuss the barriers to communication and the methods to improve communication.

**Q.4 (10 marks).** What is effective communication? Explain its principles.

**Q.5 (10 marks; any two of the four).** (a) Guidelines for group discussion. (b) Guidelines for a mock interview. (c) Distinguish between formal and informal communication. (d) Short note on a seminar.

## Model short answers (5-mark style)

**1. Define communication and state its nature.** Communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas and feelings between two or more persons so that mutual understanding is created. Its nature: it is a two-way, continuous, goal-oriented and dynamic process, in which verbal and non-verbal signs are used and which is required at every level of the organisation.

**2. What is feedback? Why is it important?** Feedback is the response of the receiver which shows how the message was understood. It completes the communication cycle, helps the sender to correct mistakes, removes doubts, and indicates whether the message has produced the desired action.

**3. State the types of grapevine.** Single strand (A to B to C in a line), gossip chain (one tells many), probability chain (told at random) and cluster chain (told to selected persons who tell other selected persons). The cluster chain is the most common in organisations.

**4. What is meant by semantic barriers?** Barriers which arise from the meaning of words and language: words with several meanings, jargon, poor vocabulary, ambiguity and faulty translation. They are removed by simple, clear language and by checking understanding.

**5. State the importance of the principle of courtesy.** A courteous message shows respect and goodwill. It improves relations with customers and colleagues, ensures a friendly response, and protects the image of the firm. Courtesy needs politeness, prompt reply, positive words and sincere thanks.

**6. Distinguish between hearing and listening.** Hearing is a physical act of sensing sound; listening is a mental process of paying attention, understanding and remembering. Good business communication needs listening, not only hearing.

**7. Why is a mock interview useful?** It gives practice in a safe setting, builds confidence, shows weak points in answers and body language, and prepares the candidate for the real selection process.

**8. Write the advantages of oral communication.** It is quick, allows immediate feedback and personal touch, saves cost for short messages, and is useful for persuasion and for confidential or urgent matters.

## Assignment and activity ideas (for the internal marks)

- Prepare and present a **5-minute speech** on a topic such as "Communication skills for commerce students".
- Take part in a **group discussion** on a current topic (digital payments, social media in business, online shopping).
- Conduct a **role play of a mock interview** in pairs and give feedback to each other.
- Prepare a **chart or poster** on the process of communication and the barriers.
- Write a **case analysis** on a communication failure in a shop or company you know.
- Prepare a **short seminar** presentation of 8 slides on e-mail etiquette.
- Observe a **real business situation** (a bank counter, shop, office) and report examples of formal and informal communication.

## Last-minute revision points

- Communication = sender, message, encoding, channel, receiver, decoding, feedback.
- Formal: downward, upward, horizontal, diagonal. Informal: grapevine (single strand, gossip, probability, cluster).
- Barriers: semantic, physical, psychological, organisational, personal, cultural.
- 7 Cs: clarity, conciseness, concreteness, correctness, completeness, consideration, courtesy.
- Oral: quick, feedback, personal. Written: record, evidence, formal.
- GD: listen, speak clearly, give chance, be positive, conclude. Interview: prepare, punctual, honest, confident.

**All the best for your examination.**

**DR.NARSINGH**