

MODULE 1

1. INTRODUCTION TO BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Business communication is the exchange of information, ideas, and messages between people within and outside a company for professional purposes. It can be verbal, written, visual, or non-verbal. In other words, it is the process of sharing information between people within the workplace and outside a company.

Effective business communication is how employees and management interact to reach organizational goals. Its purpose is to improve organizational practices and reduce errors. It's important to work on both your communication skills and communication processes to achieve effective business communication.

Effective business communication is important for a company's success because it can:

- Improve productivity
- Increase customer and employee satisfaction
- Lead to new business deals
- Reduce costs
- Build goodwill
- Help solve problems
- Coordinate activities
- Maintain strong professional relationships

Some examples of business communication include:

- Written emails
- Written letters
- Written contracts
- Live website chat
- Facebook chat or other social media messaging
- Communication on project management platforms

2. ASPECTS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

ENCODING

The process of turning thoughts into a message that can be communicated. The sender uses a medium, such as email, text, or a phone call, to send the message.

DECODING

How the receiver interprets the information. Encoding and decoding are closely linked, so choosing the wrong method to deliver a message can make it harder to decode.

FEEDBACK

An essential part of communication that strengthens it and increases effectiveness.

CONTEXT

The environmental factors that influence how a message is received and interpreted.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Involves giving the speaker your full attention, asking questions, summarizing their message, and showing empathy.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Just as important as verbal communication, and should reinforce what is being discussed.

ENVIRONMENT

Choosing the right place and time to communicate, and ensuring that the audience is receptive.

PRINCIPLES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Clarity, conciseness, concreteness, correctness, completion, coherence, and courtesy.

3. TYPES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

INTERNAL UPWARD COMMUNICATION: This flows from lower levels of a hierarchy to the upper levels. Examples include performance reports, giving feedback to superiors about different aspects, and allowing employees to communicate their experiences and suggest improvements. It plays a crucial role in enhancing job performance.

INTERNAL DOWNWARD COMMUNICATION: This typically involves getting and receiving instructions and assignments from higher to lower levels within the organization, such as directives, memos, and policy announcements. Effective delegation and clarity in this communication help prevent misunderstandings and operational errors.

INTERNAL LATERAL COMMUNICATION: Communication that takes place between and among staff members at the same level, facilitating coordination and collaboration. This includes meetings, emails, and team briefings. Effective communication in this area ensures that tasks are understood and executed correctly.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION: This encompasses all communication that occurs between the organization and external parties, such as customers, vendors, and the public. This includes marketing materials, press releases, and customer service communications. It impacts brand reputation and is essential for maintaining positive relationships outside the company.

MODULE 2

1. WRITING FOR BUSINESS AUDIENCES

KEEP IT CONCISE

When corresponding with fellow professionals, try to keep your message brief. During work hours, your recipients may not have much time to read your message. Cut out any unnecessary words or irrelevant information and keep your messages focused on your main point.

TAILOR TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Before writing, think about your readers. This step can help you determine what type of content is and is not necessary, along with the appropriate language and tone to use. For example, when writing to someone outside your industry, you should avoid using industry jargon that may not be familiar to them. Or an email to a supervisor may require a more formal tone than the one you send to a close coworker.

SPLIT UP THE TEXT

Some people find it difficult to read or focus on large text blocks. Split different ideas into new paragraphs or use bullet points to convey ideas quickly to readers. You can also incorporate elements such as headings to add context or demonstrate your main ideas.

PROOFREAD YOUR WORK

You must always review your documents before sending or submitting them. Make sure to fix and remove any spelling, grammatical or other errors. A mistake-free document impresses readers and demonstrates your professionalism. You may also want to have a colleague read it to ensure you did not miss anything.

USE APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

While "appropriate" means different things in different settings, it's generally understood by the professional community that curse words and vulgar language are inappropriate for business. Stick to respectful, professional language.

CURB FORMATTING

Beware of over-bolding, exclamation points, and all caps. While format embellishments have their uses in literature and designed objects like flyers and posters, they can quickly give a business audience the impression that a writer is inexperienced.

Instead of embellishing text with formatting, use clear, precise words to communicate so that your audience understands your premise.

KEEP IT PROFESSIONAL

The internet offers a sense of anonymity; you don't see your readers, and they don't see you. But remember that when you publish, you're talking to professional strangers. Don't say anything you wouldn't say in a meeting with a client or customer. If your readers feel attacked, belittled, or patronized, they will tune you out.

USE ORDINARY LANGUAGE

Avoid stuffing your article with unnecessary fancy words. In fact, the best way to get a first draft done quickly is to write the way you talk. Once that first draft is done, you can clean and polish it to correct errors. But there is no need to capture the biggest words in the dictionary. Trying to sound like an academic is not the best approach when you're sharing practical knowledge.

READER CENTRIC OR AUDIENCE CENTRIC WRITING

- SHAPE YOUR STATEMENTS TO INVOLVE THE READER. STRIVE TO DEVELOP THE 'YOU' ATTITUDE.

Example:

Instead of this: We are promoting a new plan that we believe has many outstanding benefits.

Try this: **You** will enjoy total peace of mind with our affordable hospitalization plan that meets all **your** needs.

Instead of this: Before we can allow you to purchase items on this new account, we must wait two weeks to verify your credit.

Try this: You may begin making purchases on your new account in two weeks.

- USE CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE.

Example:

Instead of this: The undersigned takes pleasure in.....

Try this: I'm happy to.....

- USE POSITIVE LANGUAGE.

Example:

Instead of this: We cannot fill your order until we receive an exact model number.

Try this: We can fill your order once we receive an exact model number.

- USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE.

Example:

Instead of this: Have you called a salesman?

Try this: Have you called a **salesperson**?

Instead of this: Every executive has his own office.

Try this: All executives have **their** own offices.

ROLE OF AUDIENCE IN BUSINESS WRITING

The audience is an important factor in business writing because it helps shape the tone, style, and content of a message. Understanding the audience's needs, interests, and preferences helps ensure that the message is effective and resonates with the intended readers.

Ways in which audience plays a role in business writing:

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

The process of identifying and understanding the audience helps tailor the message to their expectations. This includes analyzing the audience's needs, goals, preferences, and background.

tone and style

The tone and style of the message should match the audience's expectations. For example, the level of knowledge the audience has will determine how much background information to provide.

WORD CHOICE

Using reader-focused language can improve comprehension and strengthen the connection with the audience.

FEEDBACK

Incorporating feedback from the audience can help refine the message and overcome misunderstandings.

PRIMARY, SECONDARY, AND HIDDEN AUDIENCES

It's important to consider the primary audience, which is the intended audience, as well as secondary and hidden audiences.

TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE BUSINESS WRITING

- **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE:** It's an old saying in the advertising business: A message aimed at everyone often appeals to no one. All skilled business communications start with a clear understanding of the audience and purpose of a business document. Understanding your audience helps you write more effectively.
- **USE ACTIVE VOICE:** The active voice provides clarity to writing and avoids wordiness. In the active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action, but in the passive voice, the subject is acted on by the verb.
- **BE CONCISE:** Clear writing allows you to convey your message in a way that readers can't ignore. Enhance the readability by keeping your main points short, focusing on clear and straightforward language.

- **EDITING AND PROOFREADING:** Thorough editing and proofreading are essential for ensuring your business writing is error-free and professional.
- **AVOID ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS:** It is helpful to create a more professional document by writing out abbreviations and symbols. For example, you may type out "and" to replace the "&" symbol to portray a polished, professional look. This can also help minimize potential confusion among readers if they aren't familiar with an abbreviation or symbol you included in the document. When proofreading your writing, be sure to search for symbols and abbreviations and rewrite them before sending out the document.
- **THE 7±2 RULE:** one of the seven essential elements of successful business communication. Using seven or fewer lines can help the reader read the entire document because it helps break up long text blocks. This strategy can help increase the readability of your document and provide an easier read for individuals.
- **AVOID JARGON:** It would be helpful to replace jargon with simplified word choices. Using universal language may make it easier for the reader to understand your writing, especially if they aren't familiar with the technical aspects of your role and department. It might be helpful to use a thesaurus to help you find simple words to replace your technical terms or ask your colleagues in other departments if your writing makes sense to them or if it can use further clarification.
- **USE HEADINGS AND SUBHEADINGS:** Section your writing into easily identifiable headings. Headers and sub-headers make it easier to scan and navigate the document for the reader. Headers can comprise the main section topic, while subheadings can break the main topic down into further, digestible sections for organization and clarification.

MODULE 3

MEMORANDA

A memorandum, or memo, is a brief, professional document used to communicate important information within a business or organization. Memos are often sent to a group of people, but can also be sent to a single department or team.

FORMAT OF MEMO

DATE: List the date on which the memo is distributed.

TO: List the names of the recipients of the memo. If there are several recipients, it's acceptable to use a group name, such as "All Employees" or "Personnel Committee Members."

FROM: List the name and job title of the writer(s).

SUBJECT: Think of the SUBJECT line as the title for the memo. Make it specific so that readers can immediately identify the topic.

Memorandum

Date: Feb. 25, 2019

To: All Employees

From: Jaspreet Kaur, Operations Manager

Subject: Change in Operating Hours

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Our call centre has been experimenting with a half-day Friday work schedule over the last year, and we've recently conducted an evaluation to determine how well the program is working.

When a client calls to order their diabetic supplies on Friday afternoon, our messaging system directs them to complete their order on our company website. While many customers are willing and able to do this, many do not have Internet access (hence the reason for their call in the first place). Their only other option is to wait until Monday to place the order, and if a customer is already low on supplies, this may be untenable. Customers who are calling with questions or to resolve issues with an order must also wait for Monday.

We have received positive comments, especially from our West Coast customers, about the extended hours we are open in the evening. We have determined that to continue to offer quality service, we must also reinstate working on Friday afternoons.

However, that does not mean that we cannot continue to offer employees some scheduling perks. In fact, the addition of later hours Monday through Thursday provides us with more leeway in scheduling employees.

We will have a staff meeting on Monday, March 4 at 8:00 a.m. to discuss new scheduling procedures. To the extent possible, we wish to accommodate employees' preferences in scheduling, so it is important to attend this meeting to have your voice heard.

BUSINESS PROPOSAL

A business proposal is a document that describes a company's products and services to potential clients and partners. A typical business proposal format includes:

A business proposal usually aims to answer the following questions:

- Who you are and what your company does
- The problem your buyer is facing
- The solution your company offers to alleviate the problem
- How your company will implement this solution effectively
- An estimate of resources (time, money, etc) required to implement the solution

STEPS TO WRITE BUSINESS PROPOSAL

Component	How to create?
Cover Page	Create a professional cover page with a clear title that reflects the purpose of the proposal.
Executive Summary	Summarize the proposal's most important aspects in a compelling and attention-grabbing manner.
Table of Contents	Provide a clear and organized structure for easy navigation within the proposal
Problem Statement:	Be specific and clear about the issue and why it needs attention.
Proposed Solution	Present a well-defined solution, including methodology, strategies, and any products or services involved.
Approach and Methodology	Provide a clear roadmap for how you will execute the plan, demonstrating a practical understanding of the task at hand.
Timeline and Milestones	Show the expected timeline for project completion, which helps set expectations and manage the client's or recipient's schedule.
Budget and Pricing	Be transparent about pricing and provide a clear cost estimate for the proposed solution.
Testimonials and References	Showcase your track record and build trust by sharing feedback from satisfied clients.

BUSINESS PROPOSAL SAMPLE

[Your Non-Profit Organization's Name]

[Your Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

[Date]

To:

[Local Foundation's Name]

[Foundation Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Subject: Proposal for Funding Support for the [Community Development Project Name]

Executive Summary

[Your Non-Profit Organization's Name] is dedicated to creating lasting, positive changes in our community. Our proposed initiative, *[Community Development Project Name]*, aims to [brief summary of the initiative's purpose].

This project addresses the critical issues of [state key issues or challenges, e.g., lack of access to education, unemployment, inadequate infrastructure]. Through targeted interventions, including [list main activities, e.g., skill development workshops, infrastructure upgrades], we aim to [state expected results].

To execute this initiative, we request a grant of \$[amount] from [Foundation's Name]. This funding will enable us to deliver sustainable benefits to the community, aligning with our shared vision for [impact area, e.g., economic empowerment, education, health, etc.].

Table of Contents

1. **Executive Summary**
2. **Problem Statement**
3. **Project Goals and Objectives**
4. **Implementation Plan**
5. **Anticipated Community Impact**
6. **Budget Breakdown**
7. **Conclusion and Call to Action**

Problem Statement

[Your community or area] is currently facing significant challenges that hinder its growth and well-being. These include:

- **[Issue 1]:** [Provide details, e.g., "High unemployment rates affecting 40% of the population"].
- **[Issue 2]:** [Provide details, e.g., "Limited access to quality education for children under 12 years"].
- **[Issue 3]:** [Provide details, e.g., "Inadequate infrastructure, leading to poor health and sanitation conditions"].

These challenges disproportionately impact vulnerable groups, such as [mention affected populations, e.g., low-income families, women, youth]. Addressing these systemic issues is essential for fostering a thriving, equitable, and sustainable community.

Project Goals and Objectives

The *[Community Development Project Name]* seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. **[Goal 1]:** [Specific and measurable goal, e.g., "Train 200 individuals in employable skills by December 2024"].
 2. **[Goal 2]:** [Goal focused on the issue, e.g., "Increase access to clean water for 500 households"].
 3. **[Goal 3]:** [Goal with long-term impact, e.g., "Reduce school dropout rates by 20% over two years"].
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Implementation Plan

The project will be implemented over [timeframe]. Key milestones include:

1. **Initial Community Assessment:** [Month/Date].
2. **Training and Resource Distribution:** [Month/Date].
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** [Month/Date].

We will partner with [name partners] to ensure effective delivery of services and resources.

Anticipated Community Impact

Through this initiative, we expect the following outcomes:

1. [Impact 1, e.g., "Creation of 100 new jobs"].

2. [Impact 2, e.g., "Reduction in waterborne diseases by 15%"].
3. [Impact 3, e.g., "Enhanced literacy rates among 300 children"].

Budget Breakdown

The total cost of the project is \$[amount]. Below is a detailed breakdown:

Expense Category	Amount
Staff salaries and training	\$[amount]
Equipment and materials	\$[amount]
Community engagement events	\$[amount]
Miscellaneous costs	\$[amount]

Conclusion and Call to Action

With your generous support, [Your Non-Profit Organization's Name] can turn this vision into a reality, transforming the lives of many and fostering a more resilient community.

We are grateful for your consideration and look forward to partnering with you to make a meaningful impact. Please contact us at [your contact information] for further discussions.

Sincerely,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Position]
[Your Non-Profit Organization's Name]
[Contact Information]

EMAIL FORMAT

To: [Email Address]

Subject: [Briefly Mention the Purpose of Email]

Dear Sir/Madam,

Body: [Compose your email message here. Be clear, concise, and polite in your communication. Address the main points or concerns, providing necessary details.]

Kind regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Position/Title]
[Organisation/School/Institution Name]
[Contact Number]

Example of Email Writing

Subject: Follow-Up on Marketing Strategy Meeting

Dear Ms. Smith,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am following up on our discussion from last week's meeting regarding the marketing strategy for Q4. I would appreciate it if you could provide the final revisions to the plan by the end of this week.

Please let me know if there are any challenges or additional resources needed to meet this deadline.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Best regards,

John Doe
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