Vskills
CERTIFIED
www.vskills.com

Certified Business Communication Specialist Sample Material

Vskills Certifications

A Government of India
&
Government of NCT Delhi Co. Initiative

Skills for a secure future

1. INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

1.1 Theory of Business Communication

1.1.1 Nature and Process of Communication

The skill of effective communication is not easy to acquire. Effective communication is not just communicating by the sender but the receiver should also understand what is being said. Many people rarely realize that failure to achieve one's objectives in relationships, negotiations or decision making processes is due to a failure in communicating one's purpose and ideas accurately to others.

Communication can be defined as the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts or messages by speech, visuals, signals, writing or behaviour.

Communication requires a sender, a message, and a recipient, although the receiver need not be present or aware of the sender's intent to communicate at the time of communication; thus communication can occur across vast distances in time and space.

It is derived from the latin word communis, which means common. It refers to a natural activity of all humans, which is to convey opinions, feelings, information and ideas to others through words, body language or signs. It is a bridge among people so that they can share what they feel and know.

1.2 Classification Of Communication

1.2.1 ON THE BASIS OF NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE THE MESSAGE

✓ Intrapersonal communication is talking to one self's in one's own mind.
✓ Interpersonal communication is the exchange of messages between two people. for eg. conversations, dialogues or interviews in which two persons interact.
✓ Group communication can be among small or large groups, such as an organization, club, or classroom in which all individuals retain their individual identities.
✓ Mass communication is when message is sent to large groups by mass media such as newspaper, radio or television.

1.2.2 ON THE BASIS OF MEDIUM EMPLOYED

✓ Verbal communication means communicating with words, (written or spoken). It includes speaking, listening, writing, reading and thinking.

- ✓ Non-verbal communication includes the use of pictures, signs ,gestures and facial expressions for exchanging information between persons.
- ✓ Meta communication, is when the speaker's choice of words unintentionally communicates something more than what the words themselves state. for eg the remark "I have never seen you so badly dressed" can be taken as an insult or it means that the listener generally dresses ok.

1.3 The Purpose Of Communication

In business communication, we communicate to Inform and persuade.

COMMUNICATION TO INFORM - also called expository communication is directed by the desire to expose, develop and explain the subject. For eg farming provides most of the food we eat. Our chief food crops are cereals or grains. Cereals include maize, rice and wheat. We also grow barley and gram. (All these sentences inform the person about the facts)

COMMUNICATION TO PERSUADE - A communicator may seek primarily to persuade reader or receiver of the message. In such a form of communication, the focus in on the receiver. For eg. sales advertisements in TV or newspaper persuade the audience to buy the products by using tag lines offering discounts or free products.

1.4 The Process Of Communication

The process of communication begins with a person's desire to share or exchange an idea, thought or feelings with another person or persons. It basically involves a sender, a message, a medium or receiver.

1.4.1 THE LINEAR CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION

The earliest conceptualization of communication by Harold Laswell is based on the five basic questions

- ✓ Who?
- ✓ Says what?
- ✓ To whom?
- ✓ In which channel?
- ✓ With what effect?

Early ideas of communication considered it a one- way(linear) process marked by the flow of information from a sender to a receiver.

Sender $\longrightarrow$ Media $\longrightarrow$ Receiver $\longrightarrow$ Action
　　　Message　　　　　Message
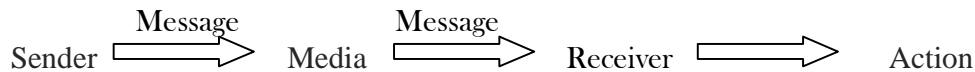
1.4.2 COMMUNICATION CYCLE

The first major model for communication was introduced by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver for Bell Laboratories in 1949. The original model was designed to mirror the functioning of radio and telephone technologies. Their initial model consisted of three primary parts: sender, channel, and receiver. The sender was the part of a telephone a person spoke into, the channel was the telephone itself, and the receiver was the part of the phone where one could hear the other person. Shannon and Weaver also recognized that often there is static that interferes with one listening to a telephone conversation, which they deemed noise.

In a simple model, often referred to as the transmission model or standard view of communication, information or content (e.g. a message in natural language) is sent in some form (as spoken language) from an emisor / sender/ encoder to a destination/ receiver/ decoder. This common conception of communication simply views communication as a means of sending and receiving information. The strengths of this model are simplicity, generality, and quantifiability. Social scientists Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver structured this model based on the following elements

- ✓ An information source, which produces a message.
- ✓ A transmitter, which encodes the message into signals
- ✓ A channel, to which signals are adapted for transmission
- ✓ A receiver, which 'decodes' (reconstructs) the message from the signal.
- ✓ A destination, where the message arrives.

Shannon and Weaver argued that there were three levels of problems for communication within this theory.

The technical problem: how accurately can the message be transmitted?

The semantic problem: how precisely is the meaning 'conveyed'?

The effectiveness problem: how effectively does the received meaning affect behaviour?

Daniel Chandler critiques the transmission model by stating

It assumes communicators are isolated individuals.

No allowance for differing purposes.

No allowance for differing interpretations.

No allowance for unequal power relations.

No allowance for situational contexts.

In 1960, David Berlo expanded on Shannon and Weaver's (1949) linear model of communication and created the SMCR Model of Communication- The Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver Model of communication.

Communication is usually described along a few major dimensions: Message (what type of things are communicated), source / emisor / sender / encoder (by whom), form (in which form), channel (through which medium), destination / receiver / target / decoder (to whom), and Receiver. Wilbur Schram (1954) also indicated that we should also examine the impact that a message has (both desired and undesired) on the target of the message. Between parties, communication includes acts that confer knowledge and experiences, give advice and commands, and ask questions. These acts may take many forms, in one of the various manners of communication. The form depends on the abilities of the group communicating. Together, communication content and form make messages that are sent towards a destination. The target can be oneself, another person or being, another entity (such as a corporation or group of beings).

Communication can be seen as processes of information transmission governed by three levels of semiotic rules

✓ Syntactic (formal properties of signs and symbols),
✓ Pragmatic (concerned with the relations between signs/expressions and their users) and
✓ Semantic (study of relationships between signs and symbols and what they represent).

Therefore, communication is social interaction where at least two interacting agents share a common set of signs and a common set of semiotic rules. This commonly held rule in some sense ignores auto-communication, including intrapersonal communication via diaries or self-talk, both

secondary phenomena that followed the primary acquisition of communicative competences within social interactions.

1.4.3 TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

In light of these weaknesses, Barnlund (2008) proposed a transactional model of communication. The basic premise of the transactional model of communication is that individuals are simultaneously engaging in the sending and receiving of messages.

In a slightly more complex form a sender and a receiver are linked reciprocally. This second attitude of communication, referred to as the constitutive model or constructionist view, focuses on how an individual communicates as the determining factor of the way the message will be interpreted. Communication is viewed as a conduit; a passage in which information travels from one individual to another and this information becomes separate from the communication itself. A particular instance of communication is called a speech act. The sender's personal filters and the receiver's personal filters may vary depending upon different regional traditions, cultures, or gender; which may alter the intended meaning of message contents. In the presence of "communication noise" on the transmission channel (air, in this case), reception and decoding of content may be faulty, and thus the speech act may not achieve the desired effect. One problem with this encode-transmit-receive-decode model is that the processes of encoding and decoding imply that the sender and receiver each possess something that functions as a codebook, and that these two code books are, at the very least, similar if not identical. Although something like code books is implied by the model, they are nowhere represented in the model, which creates many conceptual difficulties.

Theories of co-regulation describe communication as a creative and dynamic continuous process, rather than a discrete exchange of information. Canadian media scholar Harold Innis had the theory that people use different types of media to communicate and which one they choose to use will offer different possibilities for the shape and durability of society (Wark, McKenzie 1997). His famous example of this is using ancient Egypt and looking at the ways they built themselves out of media with very different properties stone and papyrus. Papyrus is what he called 'Space Binding'. It made possible the transmission of written orders across space, empires and enables the waging of distant military campaigns and colonial administration. The other is stone and 'Time Binding',

through the construction of temples and the pyramids can sustain their authority generation to generation, through this media they can change and shape communication in their society.

The interactional model includes message passing from the receiver to the source and the communication doesn't end here, the source further sends the message to the receiver.

1.4.5 THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Communication plays a key role in the success of any workplace program or policy and serves as the foundation for all types of psychologically healthy workplace practices. Communication about workplace practices helps achieve the desired outcomes for the employee and the organization in a variety of ways

✓ Bottom-up communication (from employees to management) provides information about employee needs, values, perceptions and opinions. This helps organizations select and tailor their programs and policies to meet the specific needs of their employees.

✓ Top-down communication (from management to employees) can increase utilization of specific workplace programs by making employees aware of their availability, clearly explaining how to access and use the services, and demonstrating that management supports and values the programs.

Examples of communication strategies that can help make your workplace programs successful include

✓ Providing regular, on-going opportunities for employees to provide feedback to management. Communication vehicles may include employee surveys, suggestion boxes, town hall meetings, individual or small group meeting with managers, and an organizational culture that supports open, two-way communication.

✓ Making the goals and actions of the organization and senior leadership clear to workers by communicating key activities, issues and developments to employees and developing policies that facilitate transparency and openness. The employees should not fear in speaking their minds which their bosses. At the same time, employees should not misuse this freedom of speech and maintain discipline.

✓ Practices like making minutes of the meeting, helps remember what was discussed and can be referred later if there is any discrepancy.

✓ Using multiple channels (for example, print and electronic communications, orientation and trainings, staff meetings and public addresses is beneficial. If any information has been given should be documented as well in the form of either emails of hard copy for further reference. Eg. If there is a salary cut or salary increase, one way is to just inform the employee, but at the same time, it should be documented and duly signed by all the parties involved.

✓ Leading by example, by encouraging key organizational leaders to regularly participate in activities in ways that are visible to employees.

✓ Communicating information about the outcomes and success of specific practices to all members of the organization. By keeping and following a rule book might help all those ignorant people about the policies and decorum of the organization.

1.4.6 THE ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

✓ MESSAGE - the message is the information,(written or spoken,)which is to be sent from one person to another. Here, the word represents the two ends of a system and may represent an individual, a group of individuals or even electronic machines. The most important characteristic of a message as an element of communication is that it is organized, structured, shaped and selective – a product of the pre-writing or pre-speaking stage. It exists in the mind of the sender.

✓ SENDER - The person who transmits, spreads or communicates a message or operates an electronic device. He is the one who conceives and initiates the message with the purpose of informing, persuading, influencing, or changing the attitude, opinion or behavior of the person (audience/listener).

✓ ENCODING - it is the process of changing the message into symbols consisting of patterns of words, gestures or pictorial forms or signs.

✓ CHANNEL - It is the medium that facilitates the sending of the message to the receiver. The medium of communication can be written, oral, audio-visual or live.

✓ RECEIVER – A receiver is the targeted audience of the message. He tries to understand, interpret and then perceive the meaning of the message.

✓ DECODING - The act of translating symbols' into their meanings.

✓ ACTING - communication manipulates the receiver to act in a desired manner.

✓ FEEDBACK - feedback connects the receiver with the sender .It helps the communicator to know if there is any corrections or changes to be made in the proposed communication.

1.5 The Seven C's Of Communication In Verbal Communication

THEY ARE

- ✓ CANDIDNESS:- In all business transactions, one's view should be honest and sincere and should reject prejudice or bias. The guiding principle should be fairness to self and others involved in the situation.

- ✓ CLARITY:- clarity requires the use of accurate and familiar words with proper intonation, stresses and pauses. Spoken language should consist of simple words and short sentences. Thoughts should be clear and well organized.

- ✓ COMPLETENESS:-In conversations or oral presentations, one can easily miss some parts of the communication. Thus, it is therefore essential that oral presentations, discussions or dialogues should be planned and structured.

- ✓ CONSISENESS:- one should be concise, crisp and to the point. There should not be any repetition.

- ✓ CONCRETENESS:-it means being specific and definite in describing events and things. Avoid using vague words that do not mean much.

- ✓ CORRECTNESS:- In the spoken form of communication, grammatical errors are not uncommon. The sequences of tenses should be correct.

- ✓ COURTESY:- one should say things assertively but without being rude. Courtesy demands not using words that are insulting or hurtful to the listener.

1.6 Universal Elements In Communication

These are the elements which are common to all, these can at times act as barriers to effective communication

- ✓ Environment–All communicators act within the sensory environment around them.

- ✓ Use of symbols - All communicators use verbal symbols and signs such as words, body movements, facial expressions to encode and decode messages.

- ✓ The Mental filter - All communicators/receivers of a message have to register, organize, transmit, receive, and interpret through their uniquely structured minds that have varying filters which consist of their past experiences and moods.

1.7 Interaction With Social And Electronic Media

Social media involves a natural, genuine conversation between people about something of mutual interest, a conversation built on the thoughts and experience of the participants. It is about sharing and arriving at collective point, often for the purpose of making a better or informed choice.

Internet forums, weblogs, twitter, message boards, wikis, podcasts, picture-sharing sites and other online media connect and share information in a collaborative manner. As a social web participant, commonly used are SMS Short message service (texting), blogs and microblogs, video sharing ,photo sharing, personal social networks, event services, e-mail etc. Social media is popular because they allow collobration and creativity. The audience of social media can participate by adding comments or changing the stories themselves. The empowerment and freedom of social media to add or create new content makes social media a process and not a static medium. These days people comment on social media on current events in the field of business, politics and personal life. Social media helped organize mass uprisings and awareness. The electronic media have made communication instantaneous and immediate across the world. The use of telephones, voice mail, phone conferencing, video conferencing, cell phones and e-mail as preferred modes of communication has greatly improved the decision-making process at all levels. Their use connects the person in distinct places. Email is the most used form of communication. Even within the same organization, managers and executives prefer to communicate via email instead of phone calls. It is the best form of documenting the thoughts that have to be exchanged.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Which of these is not a C in 7 C's of communication
a) Clarity
b) Character
c) Consistency
d) Courtesy

2. Which of these is not a universal element of Communication
a) Environment
b) Body Language
c) Mental Filter
d) Technological error

3. ....communication is talking to one self's in one's own mind.
a) Intrapersonal communication
b) Interpersonal communication
c) Mass communication
d) Group Communication

4. The basic purpose of communication is
a) answer
b) question
c) inform
d) persuade and inform

5. Telephones, teleconferences, video conferences are examples of
a) Written communication
b) Oral Communication
c) Non Verbal Communication
d) New Age Communication

Answers: 1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (a) 4. (d) 5. (b)