



WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: A MAJOR TOOL

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Written Communication: Communication is a skill that you can learn. It's like riding a bicycle or typing. If you are willing to work at it, you can rapidly improve the quality of every part of your life. (Brian Tracy) The term communication has been derived from the Latin work 'communis' that means 'common' and thus if a person speaks effectively, he establishes a common ground of understanding. Business wants and need people with good communication skills. Evidence of the importance of communication in business is found in numerous surveys of executives, recruiters and academicians conducted in recent years. Without exception, these surveys found communication (specially Written Communication) ranking at or near the top of the business skills needed for success. (Lesikar, Flatley: 3)

Communication is a process of transferring information from one entity to another. In simple language, communication is defined as "the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speaking, writing or signs," to bring about understanding and confidence for good industrial relations. It helps to bring about unity of purpose, interest, and efforts in an organization. According to Keith Davis, communication is the process of passing information and understanding from one person to another, it is essentially a bridge of meaning between people. By using the bridge of meaning a person can safely cross the river of misunderstanding.

At our workplace, we spend most of our time in talking, listening, reading and writing. These days communication is possible through a vast variety of media. But the most challenging media is the written communication. Written Communication is used in different forms in business organizations like letter, memo, notice, circular, reports, minutes etc. The very prospect of writing makes a person conscious. Since the written communication is open to verification and its authenticity can be easily challenged, the communicator has to be accurate and factual. It will have to be formulated with great care. (Rajendra Pal:

EC23) For example you just can not wait to use that new computer or digital camera, or mobile phone or other innovative gadget you have just purchased but often the device ends up looking into your face. Why? Because it is difficult to use and the manual is little or no help. (Bovee, Thill & Chaturvedi: 89) I try to put myself in the shoes of a new user, to think like somebody I know, "says Joe Kraynak, the author of 'complete Idiot's Guide to computer basics'. He advises all writers to do the same. (Bovee, Thill, Chaturvedi: 90)

The problem is not limited to high tech product manuals; mostly it happens in written communication that the message is written without paying proper attention to the reader's real needs. The result is confusing, frustrating messages that don't help the reader. As the written communication becomes a permanent record of the organization and can prove useful for future reference. Old orders and decisions can also serve as precedents for fresh decisions. Previous year's reports can be beneficial for formulating new policies and fixing current targets. So we just can't afford to write confusing and frustrating messages. So we will have to think a lot before writing because behind good writing lies the power of clear thinking. Clear thinking leads to clear writing. So it is necessary on the communicator's part to understand a clear purpose, who the reader is, what is to be conveyed, what is the scope, what action is expected. By following a three step writing process, an effective message can be created that will not only satisfy audience needs but also highlights the communicator's skills of writing. Three Step Writing process: involves planning, writing and completing. **Planning:** we first analyze our purpose and investigate the receiver's needs whether we have all the inputs and then adapt all the inputs according to the requirements and attitude. As soon as the need to create a message appears, the inexperienced communicators are often tempted to dive directly



into writing. However, even a few minutes of planning can save hours of rework and frustration later on.

Writing: After planning, organize the data, cover only relevant points and adopt the appropriate approach, clear statement of the main idea, include all the details in the body and then close cordially. If you think your audience will be receptive to your message use a direct approach. Start with the main idea and follow with your supporting evidence. But your audience is skeptical about your message, use an indirect approach, start with the evidence and build your case before presenting the main idea. (Bovee, Thill, Chaturvedi: 107)

Completing: To make your writing professional, devote plenty of time to revise, produce and proof read, first revise the overall impact, then evaluate and edit the content by keeping it brief, concise and clear. Design the documents to suit the receiver and choose the appropriate delivery method. Finally, proof read it. The message, which the communicator in an organization sends may be routine and positive messages. Such messages go to suppliers, government agencies, other businesses and most importantly, customers. The messages to customers receive a high priority because these messages encourage product feedback, and promote future business. For example a business letter can get you a job interview, get you off the hook, or get you money. It's totally asinine to blow your chances of getting whatever you want with a business letter that turns people off instead of turning them on". (Malcolm Forkes: 108)

Routine messages may involve the daily matters of operating a business, from placing orders to updating employees, about process changes. Positive messages convey some sort of good news, whatever you are announcing promotions, salary increments, accepting an invitation or congratulating a candidate on his selection. While writing a positive message, discuss the receiver, not the sender. Instead of general statements that you did well, include special

details like your performance is outstanding, your marketing strategy is marvelous and mind blowing. Always show your honest feelings with conversational language. (Mary Ellen Guffey: 203) Being a business communicator you may have to convey the bad news too. Now the successful communicator will have to take extra care for writing negative messages. It is a great challenge to present the negative message very honestly but in a very kind way in such case the communicator can cushion the blow of negative news by introducing it with other, more positive information. Always try to cultivate "you" view. Emphasize the second person pronouns (you, your) instead of first person pronouns (I, we, us, our). Always try to use the words you and your, whenever your goal is to inform, persuade or promote goodwill.

The communicator needs more skill in order to present the persuasive message, in which he will have to ask the audience to do something or change something. So always make an interesting point and provide supporting facts that encourage your audience to continue paying attention. The communicator should have the tendency to make the audience think, so that the main idea can be introduced.

Finally we can say that while writing a message, we should take care of clarity of thought means what is to be communicated, clarity of expression means emphasis on key words, completeness i.e. the structure and form of a piece of writing should be complete as a whole, conciseness i.e. Include only relevant facts and courtesy means words to be used should be humble and positive. When the message is organized, it saves time and conserves creative energy because the writing process is quicker. The well organized message also helps the audience in several ways. They are also better able to understand the content, so they can accept the message more easily and make better decisions based on the information conveyed.

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