



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Business Communication Skills

FOR BACHELOR STUDENTS



SKILLS

Why the Business Communication Skills Course

- Communication is the lifeblood of any organisation in the modern world.
- It facilitates organizational functions and relations with the internal and external stakeholders.
- It enables employees to fit in a highly competitive and technologically advanced world.
- It facilitates interpersonal relations for career advancement in the 21st Century.



Course Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students shall be able to;

- Explain the key concepts in business communication
- Plan for communication
- Develop appropriate messages that suit the audience
- Apply the principles of communication
- Relate well with people of different personalities
- Prepare business correspondences like letters, memos and reports
- Listen effectively
- Make winning public presentations
- Hold successful meetings
- Use and interpret the non-verbal cues

TOPIC ONE: INTRODUCTION TO



SKILLS

Topic Outline

- Introduction
- Learning Outcomes
- Definition of Business Communication
- Methods, Characteristics, Forms, of Communication
- Trends in Communication
- Factors to consider when choosing the method of communication



- Communication is part of all personal, professional and organisational aspects of life.
- It influences relationships, decisions and all personal and business operations.
- Ensuring understandability of the message is a must for personal and work excellence.
- This calls for developing Business Communication Skills.



Topic Learning Outcomes

At the end of this topic, students should be able to:

- Define communication
- Explain the methods of communication and their respective forms
- Choose the appropriate method and form of communication in a given scenario.

Definition of Communication

It is the process of giving, receiving or exchanging (sharing) information, opinions (views, thoughts) or ideas (facts about something) by writing, speaking or acting so that the message communicated is understood (by the recipient/ audience).

- Pay attention to the **denotative** (dictionary/ actual) and **connotative** (implied/ intended) meaning of messages.



Importance of Communication

- Aids decision making
- Promotes relationships among people
- Basis to analyze the performance of organizations
- Solves problems
- Motivates staff
- Liaise with external stakeholders
- Facilitates teamwork
- Organize human and other resources in the most effective way
- Aids planning in organizations
- Inform members in the organization

Methods / Types of Communication

1. Verbal

Communication: Use of words when communicating

2. Non-Verbal

communication: Non-use of words when communicating



Key Differences

Verbal Communication

- 1. Oral communication** – Communication by word of mouth.
- 2. Written Communication** – Communication through writing



Oral Communication

- Communication by word of mouth.
- Success of oral communication is dependent on the audience's ability to listen

Forms of Oral Communication

- Phone calls, face-to-face discussions, interviews, presentations, meetings, seminars, video conferencing ... etc.

Characteristics

Interactive, non - restricted audience, any time any place, immediate feedback

Written Communication

- This is when a message being sent is displayed in writing.
- Its success depends on the audience's ability to read.

Forms of Written Communication

- E-mails, letters, faxes, notices, reports, memos, questionnaires, newsletters, employee handbooks, magazines, brochures, minutes, written messages using online platforms, etc.

Characteristics

- More detailed, records, non-interaction, restrictive in use, no immediate feedback.

NB: Advantages and disadvantages (Students' assignment and this applies to all three methods of communication)

Non-verbal Communication

- This is sending and receiving wordless messages.
- It can be used alone or together with oral and written.

Forms: These are divided into the following categories

- **Environmental** (Design and Layout, Territory, Time)
- **Social** (Distance, Status and Symbols)
- **Physical** (facial expressions, appearance, smell, gesture, etc.)
- **Characteristics:** Widely used, unconscious communication, interpretation varies from culture to culture

Technology Aided Communication

With technological advancement, verbal and non-verbal communication are entwined to form visual and audio communication.

- **Visual communication-** Information is displayed in various ways that require the use of sight e.g. tables, graphs, charts, photographs, drawings etc.
- **Audio** –Messages are transmitted only through sounds
- **Audio- Visual-** Messages are sent through sounds and require the use of sight e.g. using Televisions

Trends in Communication

The evolving developments in communication from the past to the present;

Ancient Times

- Oral tradition (storytelling)
- Written communication (hieroglyphics, papyrus)
- Messengers and homing pigeons

Medieval Period

- Handwritten letters
- Town criers and public announcements
- Printing press (1450s)

Early Modern Period

- Postal services (1635)
- Newspapers (1605)
- Telegraphy (1794)

Industrial Age

- Telegraph (1837)
- Telephone (1876)
- Radio (1895)

20th Century

- Television (1927)
- Computers and email (1960s)
- Mobile phones (1973)
- Internet and World Wide Web (1990s)

Cont'... Trends in Communication

21st Century

- Social media and online platforms
- Instant messaging and texting
- Video conferencing and virtual meetings
- Artificial intelligence and chatbots
- Remote work and virtual teams
- Podcasting and voice assistants
- Augmented reality and virtual reality

Current Trends

- Personalization and targeted communication
- Visual and interactive content
- Automation and AI-powered communication
- Mobile-first and voice-first strategies
- Virtual and hybrid events
- Inclusive and accessible communication
- Data-driven and measurable communication

Assignment

Research on the trends in communication in Uganda specifying:

- Current Trends
- Advantages
- Limitations



Factors to Consider when Choosing a Method of Communication

- Recipient/ audience- his/her status, nature and relationship
- Time of communication
- Urgency/ speed-urgency of feedback
- Cost-affordability of the cost.
- Confidentiality
- Safety and security
- Availability of means
- Nature of the message (size)
- Knowledge of the sender
- Influence



Scenario Exercise

Using an email, a Senior Administrator invited members of the Faculty of Business Administration to attend the Faculty Board Meeting and Examiners Board Meeting that was held on 23rd July 2024. Faculty members attended the meeting chaired by the Dean of the Faculty. In the meeting, members listened to the communication from their Dean and Heads of Departments then later members reacted to the communication. They were also able to share different ideas and grievances. The Secretary of the meeting wrote minutes of what transpired in the meeting, in the process, she highlighted the actions to be taken that would guide in making important decisions and solving problems raised.



Scenario Questions

1. Explain with evidence the extent to which communication took place.
2. Articulate the methods of communication that were used in the case study.
3. For each method of communication, determine the forms of communication used.
4. Based on current trends in communication evidenced in the scenario, analyse the advantages and limitations of using such communication.
5. Analyse the factors of communication that could have been considered when choosing the method of communication by the Senior Administrator, Dean and members.



References



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Thank you for being a great audience



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