INTRODUCTION

Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee and just as hard to sleep after. Communication is a process by which information is transmitted and understood between two or more people. It should include both transference and the understanding of meaning.

Communication is the life blood of social as well as corporate world. We exist because we communicate. Even our silence communicates a lot. We all have a layman's idea of what communication is , but let us try to understand the concept fully so that we can use it effectively.

Communication is the process by which we exchange meanings , facts , ideas ,opinions or emotions with other people. It is an essential condition of our existence and the most important activity of ours. The word communication has been derived from Latin word " communicare/communis' that means to 'share' or 'participate' . Everybody knows that most of the time , through speech or writing or any other means like exchange of a common set of symbols , we are sharing information with other human beings. It is , therefore , first and foremost a social activity. Man as a social animal has to communicate.

Communication is an exchange of facts , ideas , opinions or emotions by two or more persons.

General communication is different from business communication / Administrative communication.

According to William Scott in his book organizational theory " Administrative communication is a process which involves the transmission and accurate replication of ideas ensured by feedback for the purpose of eliciting actions which will accomplish organizational goals"

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages. However it is said to be effective only when the message is understood and when it stimulates action or encourages the receiver to think in new ways.

OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNICATION

1. STRONGER DECISION MAKING

Your ability to communicate effectively increases productivity , both yours and your organization.

2. INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

With good communication skills , you can anticipate problems , make decisions , co-ordinate work flow , supervise others , develop relationships and promote products and services.

3. STEADIER WORK FLOW

Communication acts as tool for the effective work related flow of information.

4. STRONG BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS & ENHANCED PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

You can shape the impressions you and your company make on colleagues , employees ,supervisors , investors ,and customers in addition to perceiving and responding to the needs of these stakeholders(the various group you interact with) without effective communication , people misunderstand each other and misinterpret information. Ideas misfire or fail to gain attention and people and companies flounder.

5. CLEARER PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Your organizations need for effective reach of company name and public promotions are based on effective promotional material such as advertisements , bill boards , online add , posters etc are all communicated for effective message delivery and meaning.

6. PROVIDE ADVICE

Giving advice is based on individual-oriented and work-oriented ,advice should not given to the person for pinpointing his mistakes rather it should be helpful for his improvement. Effective advice promotes understanding and it can be a two way process if the subordinate staff given freedom.

7. PROVIDE ORDER

Order is an authoritative communication pattern and it is directive to somebody always a subordinate to do something. Orders will be written and oral orders , general and specific orders ,procedural and operational orders , mandatory and discretionary order. Order should be clear and complete ,execution should be possible and given in a friendly way.

8.SUGGESTION

Suggestion is supposed to be very mild and subtle form of communication.   Suggestions are welcomed for it is not obligatory to accept them , it can be voluntary and anonymous and submitted through suggestion boxes.

9. PERSUASION

Persuasion may be defined as an effort ' to influence the attitudes , feelings ,or beliefs of others , or to influence actions based on those attitudes , feelings , or beliefs. Persuasion can be done to others if you are convinced , you do not impose , you are not rigid are prepared to meet half-way and you can look at the situation from the other person's angle also.

10. EDUCATION

Education is a very conscious process of communication ,it involves both teaching and learning by which organizations provide to their employees in the form of training. Education is given for management , employees and outside public.

12. WARNING

If the employees do not abide by the norms of the organization warning is a power communication tool and it can be general and specific. Specific warning should be administered in private and after thorough investigation. The aim of the warning should be the organization betterment.

13. RAISING MORALE AND MOTIVATION

Morale stands for mental health and it is a sum of several qualities like courage , resolution , confidence .High morale and effective performance go hand to hand. Motivation is a process that account for an individual intensity, direction , and persistence of effort towards attaining a goal.

14. TO GIVE AND RECEIVE INFORMATION

Communication's main idea is to give and receive information because managers need complete , accurate and precise information to plan and organize employee need it to translate planning in to reality. Information will cover all aspects of the business.

15. TO PROVIDE COUNSELLING

Counseling is given to solve employees mental stress and improve the employees productivity.

16. TO IMPROVE DISCIPLINE

Finally discipline is the foremost part of any business communication. The various disciplinary codes are effectively communicated to employees through disciplinary codes.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS MODEL

PHASE 1

A Person has an idea or thought which he wants to communicate to the other person. Now the sender sends the message with a carefully selected medium and channel. The sender encodes the idea (i.e) Written or spoken word , facial expression , gesture. The message length,tone, and style all depends on your audience and your personal style or mood. The sender transmits the message to the receiver in a form of channel (i.e) Telephone , letter , memo , email , report , face to face exchange.

PHASE 2

The message will now enter in to the sensory world of the receiver. Sensory world we mean all the noise that surrounds a person that the senses sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch can detect.

PHASE 3

From this sensory world the receiver picks up the messages through his senses. But receiver senses cannot detect all that exists in the world around him. Just how much they can detect depends on a number of factors. One is the ability of his senses. As you know not all eyes see equally well and not all ears hear equally well. And so it is with the other senses. Another factor is receiver mental alertness. There are times when he is keenly alert to all that his senses can detect, and there are times when he is dull – in a stupor, a daydream, or the like. Then there are the distractions "NOISES" that occur around receiver at the moment. They can weaken, perhaps even eliminate, the stimuli sent. Furthermore, receiver cultural background has sensitized him more to some stimuli than to others. Yet another limiting factor is the receiver will. In varying degrees, the mind is able to tune in

or tune out events in the sensory world. In a noisy room full of people for example, the conversation of a single person can be selected and the other voices ignored.

PHASE 4

When receiver senses pick up sender message, they relay it to his brain-that is, as much or as little of the message as they detect. But the sender message may not be all that receiver senses pick up. In addition to sender message, his sensory world may contain outside sounds, movements of objects, facial expression, and the like. In fact, this senses are continually picking up messages from the world around him. Sender message is just the primary one at the moment. The others are there, and they might interfere with sender's message.

PHASE 5

When sender message gets to receiver brain, it goes through a sort of filtering or decoding process. Through that process the receiver brain gives meaning to sender message. In other words, the message is filtered through the contents of receiver mind. Those contents are made up of all receiver knows. It includes all the cultural influences of his family , his organization memberships, his social group, and such. In fact, it includes all receiver has learned, experienced and thought throughout his life. Obviously , no two people have precisely identical filters, for no two people have minds with precisely the same contents. Because people' filters differ, the meanings they give to comparable message may differ. Thus, the meaning receiver gives sender message may not be precisely the same as the one that someone else would give it. And it may not be meaning sender intended.

PHASE 6

After his mind has given meaning to sender message, receiver may react to the message. If the meaning he received is sufficiently strong, he may react by communicating some form of response

called feedback. This response may be through words, gestures, physical actions or some other means.

PHASE 7

When receiver elects to communicate a response, through his mind he determines the general meaning encoding that the response will take. This process involves the most complex workings of the mind, and we know little about it. There is evidence, however, that ability, here and throughout this stage, is related to one's intelligence and the extent that one permits the mind to react. Receiver ability to evaluate filtered information and formulate meaning also is related to his stage, is related to one's intelligence and the extent that one permits the mind to react. Receiver ability to evaluate filtered information and formulate meaning also is related to his ability with language. Ability with language equips one with a variety of symbols, words and other ways of expressing meaning. And the greater the number of symbols one possesses, the better one can be at selecting and using them. Receiver ends this stage of the communication process by forming a message. That is, he converts meaning in to symbols decodes mainly in to words, and then he sends these symbols to sender. He may send them in a number of ways: as spoken words, written words, gestures, movements, facial expression, diagrams on paper etc.

PHASE 8

When receiver sends his message to sender, one cycle of the communication process ends. Now a second cycle begins. Now the sender becomes the receiver and receiver becomes the sender. The message enters receiver sensory world. Her senses pick it up and send it through her nervous system to her brain. There her unique mental filter influences the meaning he gives to sender message. This filtered meaning also may bring about a response. If it does, receiver, through her mind, selects the symbols for his response. Then he sends them to sender, and another cycle of communication begins. The process may continue, cycle after cycle, as long as both sender and receiver want to communicate.

Although our description of the communication process illustrates face to face, oral communication, it also fits written communication. But there are some differences. Perhaps the most significant difference is that written communication is more likely to involve creative effort. It is more likely to be thought out, and it may even begin in the mind rather than as a reaction to a message received. A second differences is the time between cycles. In face to face communication, cycles occur fast,

often in rapid succession. In written communication, some delay occurs. How long the delay will be varies. While instant and text messaging may be read within a few seconds of sending, fax or email messages may be read within few minutes after they are transmitted, letters in a few days, reports perhaps in days, weeks, or months. Because they provide a record, written messages may communicate over extremely long time periods. A third difference is that written communication usually involves a limited number of cycles and oral communication usually involves many. In fact, some written communication is one cycle communication. That is a message is sent and received, but none is returned.

FORMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Whether an organization is large , small or virtual , sharing information among its parts and with the outside world is the glue that binds the organization together. When you join a company , you become a link in its information chain. Whether you're a top manager or an entry-level employee , you have information that others need in order to perform their jobs, and others have information that is crucial to you. To succeed organization must share information with people both inside and outside the company. It includes the internal and external structure through which messages pass and the way information is presented , as well as the actual content of the messages themselves. As you exchange information with people inside and outside the organization you use a variety of formal and informal forms of communication.

COMMUNICATION

FORMAL

INTERNAL

Planned communication among with insiders (letters , reports , memos , e-mail) that follows the company's chain of command

EXTERNAL

Planned communication with outsiders (letters , reports , memos , speeches , websites and news release)

INFORMAL

INTERNAL

Casual communication among employees (email , face-to-face conversations and phone calls that do not follow the company's chain of command)

EXTERNAL

Casual communication with suppliers , customers , investors and other outsiders (Face- to-face conversations , email and phone calls)

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION :

It refers to the exchange of information and ideas within an organization. As employee, you are in a position to observe things that your supervisors and co-workers cannot see: a customer's first reaction to a product display , a supplier's brief hesitation before agreeing to a delivery date or a

slowdown in the flow of customers. Managers and co-workers need these little gems of information in order to do their jobs. Internal communication helps employees do their jobs , develop a clear sense of the organization's mission and identify and react quickly to potential problems. To maintain a healthy flow of information within the organization , effective communicators use both formal and informal channels.

Formal internal communication network : The formal flow of information follows the official chain of command. There are organizational charts in many company's which commands good communication flow. In organization information flows down , up , and across the formal hierarchy.

Downward flow : Organizational decisions are usually made at the top and then flow down to the people who will carry them out. Most of what filters downward is geared towards helping employees do their jobs. From top to bottom , each person must understand each message , apply it , and pass it along.

Upward Flow : To solve problems and make intelligent decisions , managers must learn what's going on in the organization. Because they can't be everywhere at once, executives depend on lower-level employees to furnish them with accurate , timely reports on problems , emerging trends , opportunities for improvement , grievances , and performance.

Horizontal flow : Communication also flows from one department to another , either laterally or diagonally. This horizontal communication helps employees share information and coordinate tasks , and it is especially useful for solving complex and difficult problems.

Formal organization charts illustrate how information is supposed to flow. In actual practice , however , lines and boxes on a piece of paper cannot prevent people from talking with one another.

Informal internal communication : Every organization has an informal communication network known as grapevine that supplements official channels. As people go about their work , they have casual conversations with their friends in the office. Although many of these conversations deal with personal matters , about 80 percent of the information that travels along the grapevine pertains to business. The informal communication network carries information along the organization's unofficial lines of activity and power. The grapevine is an important source of information in most organizations.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION: The external communication network links the organization with the outside world of customers , suppliers , competitors , and investors , journalists , and community representatives. Sometimes this external communication is carefully orchestrated – especially during a crisis. At other times it occurs informally as part of routine business operations.

Formal external communication : Companies use external communication to create a favorable impression. Whether by letter , website , phone , fax , internet , or videotape , good communication is the first step in creating a favorable impression. Carefully constructed letters , reports , memos , oral presentation , and websites convey an important message to outsiders about the quality of your organization. Messages such as statements to the press , letters to investors , advertisements , price increase announcements and litigation updates require special care because of their delicate nature. Therefore , such documents are often drafted by a marketing or public relations team – a group of individuals whose sole job is creating and managing the flow of formal messages to outsiders. The public relations team is also responsible for helping management plan for and respond to crises – which can range from environmental accidents or sabotage situations to strikes , massive product failure , major litigation , or even an abrupt change in management. To minimize the impact of any crisis , expert communicators advise managers to communicate honestly , openly , and often. If handled improperly , a crises can destroy a company's reputation.

Informal external communication : Although companies usually communicate with outsiders in a formal manner , informal contacts with outsiders are important for learning about customer needs. As a member of an organization , you are an important informal conduit for communicating with the outside world. Every employee informally accumulates facts and impressions that contribute to the organizations collective understanding of the outside world. In the course of your daily activity you unconsciously absorb bits and pieces of information that add to the collective knowledge of your company. Top managers rely heavily on informal contacts with outsiders to gather information that might be useful to their companies. Much of their networking involves interaction with fellow executives. Many top level employees recognize the fact that keeping constant touch with the external real world , front line employees , customers by making a opportunity to talk to them and getting feedback helps in organizational improvement. Receiving feedback is considered to be the most important aspect of communication.

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COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

Introduction

In an organization, information flows forward, backwards and sideways. This information flow is referred to as communication. refer to the way this information flows within the organization and with other organizations.

In this web known as communication, a manager becomes a link. Decisions and directions flow upwards or downwards or sideways depending on the position of the manager in the communication web.

For example, reports from lower level manager will flow upwards. A good manager has to inspire, steer and organize his employees efficiently, and for all this, the tools in his possession are spoken and written words.

For the flow of information and for a manager to handle his employees, it is important for an effectual communication channel to be in place.

The Working of a Communication Channel

Through a modem of communication, be it face-to-face conversations or an inter-department memo, information is transmitted from a manager to a subordinate or vice versa.

An important element of the communication process is the feedback mechanism between the and employees.

In this mechanism, employees inform managers that they have understood the task at hand while managers provide employees with comments and directions on employee's work.

Importance of a Communication Channel

A breakdown in the communication channel leads to an inefficient flow of information. Employees are unaware of what the company expects of them. They are uninformed of what is going on in the company.

This will cause them to become suspicious of motives and any changes in the company. Also without effective communication, employees become department minded rather than company minded, and this affects their decision making and productivity in the workplace.

Eventually, this harms the overall organizational objectives as well. Hence, in order for an organization to be run effectively, a good manager should be able to communicate to his/her employees what is expected of them, make sure they are fully aware of company policies and any upcoming changes.

Therefore, an effective communication channel should be implemented by managers to optimize worker productivity to ensure the smooth running of the organization.

Media Of Communication

Face-to-Face

Face-to-face or personal communication is one of the richest channels of communication that can be used within an organization. Physical presence, the tone of the speaker's voice and facial expressions help recipients of a message interpret that message as the speaker intends. This is the best channel to use for complex or emotionally charged messages, because it allows for interaction between speaker and recipients to clarify ambiguity. A speaker can evaluate whether an audience has received his message as intended and ask or answer follow-up questions.

Broadcast Media

TV, radio and loud speakers all fall within the broadcast media communication channel. These types of media should be used when addressing a mass audience. Businesses seeking to notify customers of a new product may advertise or do promotions using a broadcast channel. Similarly, a CEO may do a global company address by having a television feed broadcast across global sites. When a message intended for a mass audience can be enhanced by being presented in a visual or auditory format, a broadcast channel should be used.

Mobile

A mobile communication channel should be used when a private or more complex message needs to be relayed to an individual or small group. A mobile channel allows for an interactive exchange and gives the recipient the added benefit of interpreting the speaker's tone along with the message. Some within an organization may opt to use this channel versus a face-to-face channel to save on the time and effort it would take to coordinate a face-to-face meeting.

Electronic

Electronic communication channels encompass email, Internet, intranet and social media platforms. This channel can be used for one-on-one, group or mass communication. It is a less personal method of communication but more efficient. When using this channel, care must be taken to craft messages with clarity and to avoid the use of sarcasm and innuendo unless the message specifically calls for it.

Written

Written communication should be used when a message that does not require interaction needs to be communicated to an employee or group. Policies, letters, memos, manuals, notices and announcements are all messages that work well for this channel. Recipients may follow up through an electronic or face-to-face channel if questions arise about a written message.

Language Barriers

Language and linguistic ability may act as a barrier to communication.

However, even when communicating in the same language, the terminology used in a message may act as a barrier if it is not fully understood by the receiver(s). For example, a message that includes a lot of specialist jargon and abbreviations will not be understood by a receiver who is not familiar with the terminology used.

Regional colloquialisms and expressions may be misinterpreted or even considered offensive. See our page: Effective Speaking for more information.

Psychological Barriers

The psychological state of the communicators will influence how the message is sent, received and perceived.

For example, if someone is stressed they may be preoccupied by personal concerns and not as receptive to the message as if they were not stressed.

Stress management is an important personal skill that affects our interpersonal relationships. See our pages Stress: Symptoms and Triggers and Avoiding Stress for more information.

Anger is another example of a psychological barrier to communication, when we are angry it is easy to say things that we may later regret and also to misinterpret what others are saying.

See our pages: What is Anger?, Anger Management and Anger Management Therapy for more information.

More generally people with low self-esteem may be less assertive and therefore may not feel comfortable communicating - they may feel shy about saying how they really feel or read negative sub-texts into messages they hear.

Visit our pages on Improving Self-Esteem and Assertiveness for more information.

Physiological Barriers

Physiological barriers may result from the receiver's physical state.

For example, a receiver with reduced hearing may not grasp to entirety of a spoken conversation especially if there is significant background noise.

Physical Barriers

An example of a physical barrier to communication is geographic distance between the sender and receiver(s).

Communication is generally easier over shorter distances as more communication channels are available and less technology is required. Although modern technology often serves to reduce the impact of physical barriers, the advantages and disadvantages of each communication channel should be understood so that an appropriate channel can be used to overcome the physical barriers.

Systematic Barriers

Systematic barriers to communication may exist in structures and organisations where there are inefficient or inappropriate information systems and communication channels, or where there is a lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities for communication. In such organisations, individuals may be unclear of their role in the communication process and therefore not know what is expected of them.

Attitudinal Barriers

Attitudinal barriers are behaviours or perceptions that prevent people from communicating effectively.

Attitudinal barriers to communication may result from personality conflicts, poor management, resistance to change or a lack of motivation. Effective receivers of messages should attempt to overcome their own attitudinal barriers to facilitate effective communication.

TOOLS OF COMMUNICATION

The message is said to be effective when the receiver understands the same meaning that the sender was intended to convey. For any communication in business, in order to be effective, it must

have seven qualities. These seven attributes are called seven C's of effective business communication. (All these attribute starts with the alphabet 'C' so are called 7 C's)

Clear: Make the goal of your message clear to your recipient. Ask yourself what the purpose of your is.

Concise: Your message should also be brief and to the point. Why communicate your message in six sentences when you can do it in three?

Concrete: Ensure your message has important details and facts, but that nothing deters the focus of your message.

Correct: Make sure what you're writing or saying is accurate. Bad information doesn't help anybody. Also make sure that your message is typo free.

Coherent: Does your message make sense? Check to see that all of your points are relevant and that everything is consistent with the tone and flow or your text.

Complete: Your message is complete when all relevant information is included in an understandable manner and there is a clear "call to action". Does your audience know what you want them to do?

Courteous: Ensure that your is friendly, open, and honest, regardless of what the message is about. Be empathetic and avoid passive-aggressive tones.

Think about the 7 Cs every time you need to communicate something and you'll always know you're delivering the clearest message possible.

A report can be defined as a testimonial or account of some happening. It is purely based on observation and analysis. A report gives an explanation of any circumstance. In today's corporate world, reports play a crucial role. They are a strong base for planning and control in an organization,

i.e., reports give information which can be utilized by the management team in an organization for making plans and for solving complex issues in the organization.

A report discusses a particular problem in detail. It brings significant and reliable information to the limelight of top management in an organization. Hence, on the basis of such information, the management can make strong decisions. Reports are required for judging the performances of various departments in an organization.

An effective report can be written going through the following steps-

1. Determine the objective of the report, i.e., identify the problem.
2. Collect the required material (facts) for the report.
3. Study and examine the facts gathered.
4. Plan the facts for the report.
5. Prepare an outline for the report, i.e., draft the report.
6. Edit the drafted report.
7. Distribute the draft report to the advisory team and ask for feedback and recommendations.

The essentials of good/ are as follows-

1. Know your objective, i.e., be focused.
2. Analyze the niche audience, i.e., make an analysis of the target audience, the purpose for which audience requires the report, kind of data audience is looking for in the report, the implications of report reading, etc.
3. Decide the length of report.
4. Disclose correct and true information in a report.
5. Discuss all sides of the problem reasonably and impartially. Include all relevant facts in a report.
6. Concentrate on the report structure and matter. Pre-decide the style. Use vivid structure of sentences.
7. The report should be neatly presented and should be carefully documented.
8. Highlight and recap the main message in a report.
9. Encourage feedback on the report from the critics. The feedback, if negative, might be useful if properly supported with reasons by the critics. The report can be modified based on such feedback.
10. Use graphs, pie-charts, etc to show the numerical data records over years.

11. Decide on the margins on a report. Ideally, the top and the side margins should be the same (minimum 1 inch broad), but the lower/bottom margins can be one and a half times as broad as others.
12. Attempt to generate reader's interest by making appropriate paragraphs, giving bold headings for each paragraph, using bullets wherever required, etc.

PROCESS OF DRAFTING BUSINESS MESSAGE

Whether you are preparing a written or an oral business message, to be effective you need to plan, organize, draft, revise, edit, and proofread.

Essential also is thoughtful adherence to communication principles--- The 7C's and awareness of legal and ethical aspects.

Five Planning Steps

Identify your purpose

Analyze your audience

Choose your ideas

Collect your data

Organize your message

Identify your purpose

The objective of your message is almost always twofold:

The reason for the message itself.

And--- The creation of goodwill.

Analyze your audience

See your message from your receivers' point of view:

Their Needs,

Their Interests,

Their Attitude,

And--- Their Culture.

Choose your ideas

The ideas you include depend on the type of message

You are sending,

The situation,

And the cultural context.

Collect your data

Be sure to collect enough data to support your ideas:

Check names,

Dates,

Addresses,

And statistics for precision.

Organize your message

The order in which you present your ideas is as important as the ideas themselves.

Organizing your material before writing your first draft can prevent rambling and unclear message.

Basic Organizational Plan

Direct (Deductive) Approach

Indirect (Inductive) Approach

Direct (Deductive) Approach

Deleting Buffer

Receptiveness

Main Idea

Explanation

Courteous Close

Indirect (Inductive) Approach

Adding Buffer

Resistance

Buffer

Explanation

Decision / Main Idea

Positive Friendly Close

Beginnings and Endings

Opening Paragraphs

Closing Paragraphs

Opening Paragraphs

Choose an appropriate for the message purpose and for the reader.

1. Main Idea first for good news.

2. Buffer first for bad news.

3. Attention getting statements.

Make the opening considerate, courteous, concise, clear.

1. Keep first paragraph relatively short.

2. Focus on positive.

3. Avoid unnecessary repetition.

Check completeness regarding:

1. Sentence structure.

2. Date of letter you are answering.

Closing Paragraphs

Make your action request clear and complete with the 5W's and 1H.

End on a positive, courteous thought.

1. Be friendly.

2. Show appreciation.

3. Occasionally add a personal note.

Keep the last paragraph concise and correct.

1. Avoid trite expressions.

2. Omit discussion of trivial details.

3. Use relatively short and complete sentence.

Composing the Message

Drafting your message

Revising your message

Editing and proofreading you message

Drafting your message

No two people prepare their first draft in same way:

– Some go from one point to another.

– Just putting the ideas.

The important thing is to get the most important information in your message on paper... early.

Revising your message

– Does your message accomplish its purpose?

– Have you chosen the most effective organizational plan?

– Are your points supported by adequate material?

– Is your language following 7C's?

– Have you used variety in sentence structure?

Editing and proofreading you message

Check mistakes for:

– Grammar,

– Spelling,

– Punctuation,

– Or Word choice.

WRITING BUSINESS LETTERS

In business, we are not only judged by our appearance, but also by our ability to communicate. Whether it is in person, over the phone, or through written letters, emails, and memos, the way in

which we express ourselves says a lot. Drafting a business letter can be particularly difficult for many people. Apart from the formal tone, the writer has to pay special attention to how they format the letter and phrase the wording. It is definitely worth it to brush up on the basics of writing a business letter. To help you, we've put together this letter writing guide. It could come in handy when communicating with corporate associates or clients, applying for a job, requesting information, or even filing a complaint.

Business Letter Structure and Elements

Address of the Sender

It is usually common for the sender to have their address in the letterhead. Alternatively, they can add these details as the first item on the page. This section should only include the physical mailing address without any other contact details.

Date of Writing

The date is usually inserted just below the sender's address. For letters created over a period of time, they should bear the date when the letter was completed. Do be sure to make the distinction between U.S. and other international date formats and use them as appropriate. The date is placed at the left or center.

Recipient's Address

The recipient's mailing address follows under the date on the left side of the page. Whenever possible, precede it with the name and title of the recipient. In some cases if the person's title is unclear, do a bit of research to verify it. This type of information can easily be found on corporate websites or by phoning the company.

Greeting

The salutation at the beginning of the letter can vary depending on how well the sender knows the recipient. In extremely formal cases, it is acceptable to simply list the recipient's title and surname. When the two people are on a first name basis, the salutation can instead read, "Dear [first name]". If the person's gender is unknown, it is best to forgo a title and simply list their full name.

Body of the Letter

The first paragraph should be concise and clearly written. It is customary to include a brief amiable sentence, followed by the reason behind the letter. The following paragraphs should be used to

elaborate on this reason. Include any necessary details and information to ensure that the recipient fully understands. The last paragraph is the closing paragraph. It should be used to sum up the letter and request any specific actions that are needed.

The Closing

After the concluding paragraph, leave a blank line, and then add a closing word such as "Thank you", "Sincerely" or "Best regards". This should always be followed by a comma and the sender's signature below it. It is usually better to personally sign the letter instead of using a digital copy of the signature. Below the signature should be the sender's name typed out. This is especially useful since most signatures are difficult to read clearly.

Enclosed Documents

If any supporting documents have been attached, list them at the bottom of the letter. This section should be titled "Enclosures". For digital letters, include the actual file name along with its extension (e.g.: JohnSmith-Resume.pdf).

Typist's Identification

If somebody else has typed the letter, they should indicate this by including their initials at the very bottom of the page. Senders who type the letter themselves do not need to include their own initials.

Business Letter Formatting Guidelines

Block Format

This format is the most common version in use. It uses left justified paragraphs for the entire letter. All text is single spaced, with double spacing inserted between each paragraph.

Modified Block Format

The modified block format is another popular version for business letters. It follows the same formatting as the block format except for the date and the letter's closing. These two items are centered instead of being left aligned.

Semi Block Format

The semi block format is heavily used. Instead of left aligned the paragraphs, they are indented in the first line. There can also sometimes be other variations for formal business letter formats, depending on company variations. If the organization has an official style guide, always refer to that first. Most word processing software programs come with helpful templates that can be used when creating business letters. Simply select the desired template and then plug in the information within each section.

Using the Right Fonts

Choosing the right font is crucial to ensure that the letter is legible. Avoid fancy fonts that look strange to the eyes. A standard serif font like Times New Roman at size 12 is the norm. Sans-serif fonts like Arial can be a little harder to read in blocks of text; they are better used for headers or single lines. In some cases, different fonts might be acceptable for aesthetic purposes or if it is the norm within the organization's stationery.

Punctuation, Grammar, and Spell Checking

In general, a colon is placed following the salutation, and a comma is inserted just after the letter's closing phrase. The open punctuation method forgoes both of these. Always pay close attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation after writing the letter. Run a spell check within the word processor to catch any glaring mistakes. It is also helpful to have another person read the letter and point out any remaining errors.

COVER LETTER

Cover letters can be what gets you pulled out of a stack of applications and called for an interview. They can make the difference between hearing nothing from an employer and eventually getting offered a job.

Cover letters are crucial to hiring managers who understand that people are more than just their work experience – that people have personalities, motivations, habits and other reasons they'd be great at a particular job that aren't easily seen from a résumé. After all, if this weren't true, employers wouldn't even need to bother to interview candidates; they could just screen résumés, verify that candidates' experience and accomplishments were accurate and then hire the person with the best résumé.

But that's not how it works, and so when done well, a cover letter takes a first step at explaining that additional piece of what you're all about.

Here's how to write a compelling cover letter that will get you interviews.

1. Show personal interest in the particular job that you're applying for. A strong cover letter will make a convincing case that you're truly excited about the opportunity (without resorting to generic reasons that you could use when writing to every other company too). What grabbed you about the job description or the company? Why would you prefer this job over others out there? Why do you think you'd be great at it? What in your background demonstrates that you'd excel at the work?

2. Don't summarize your résumé. Too often, job seekers simply summarize the contents of their résumé in their cover letter. With such limited initial contact, you do yourself a disservice if you use a whole page of your application to simply repeat the contents of the other pages. The cover letter should add something new to your candidacy – information that doesn't belong on your résumé like personal traits, work habits, why you're interested in the job, maybe even a reference to feedback from a previous manager. Speaking of which …

3. If something makes you especially well-suited for the job aside from what's on your résumé, mention it. For example, maybe the position requires an inordinate degree of meticulousness and you frequently get teased for being obsessive about details. That's a perfect thing to mention in a cover letter, and it's information that wouldn't be found on your résumé. If you're having trouble thinking of those qualities, try thinking about what you would tell a friend if you were explaining why you were excited about this particular job and why you think you would be great at it. Does that explanation add anything that your friend couldn't get from just looking at your résumé? It probably does – and that's what you want to convey.

4. Stay away from hyperbole. Statements like "I'm the best candidate for the job" and "You won't find a candidate better qualified than me" come across as naive. You have no way of knowing what the rest of the candidate pool looks like, and only the hiring manager is equipped to assess your candidacy against that pool. Keep the focus on why you'd excel at the job without trying to put down your competition. Your cover letter shouldn't sound like an infomercial.

5. If you know you're overqualified but you don't mind, explain that in your cover letter. If you don't address it up front, many hiring managers will assume that you wouldn't be enthusiastic about the job without ever giving you a chance to tell them why you're interested anyway.

6. Be conversational. Job seekers sometimes feel that a cover letter should be as formal as possible, but the best cover letters are written in a conversational, engaging tone. Of course, don't be overly casual; don't use slang, and pay careful attention to things like grammar and spelling. But your tone and the language should be conversational, warm and engaging.

8. In case it's not obvious from the above, don't use a form letter. Hiring managers can tell the difference between a letter that you're sending with all your applications and a letter that you wrote specifically for this job. If your letter works for all the jobs you're applying to, that's a sign that it needs to be more customized.

RESUME WRITING

An effective resume writing should have the following:

Heading

Type your name at the top in caps with large, bold type. Include your address, phone number, and email address. If you plan to move while your resume is in use, include your school address and your permanent address.

Objective

Get focused on your job objective before writing the rest of the resume and tailor the resume to the job and the field.

Clearly state theposition you are seeking and whether it is a full-time or part-time job or an internship. You can also include the industry and any skills you want to emphasize. Avoid vague phrases that focus on what you will gain from the experience. Everything that follows on the resume should support the objective.

Education

Identify your degree, major, graduation date, and school.

Include education abroad and any relevant vocational schools, certificates, and job training.

You may include your GPA if it is 3.0 or higher. Employer expectations may vary.

Course Listings

You may include a short list of courses to show experience, training, or knowledge in the field as long as they are relevant to the job objective.

Skills

Make your skills the selling point of your resume. Include specific skills that pertain to your objective such as computer languages, technical skills, and lab techniques. You may also include interpersonal and adaptive skills such as communication, leadership, writing research, teamwork, etc.

Be sure to back up each skill on your resume with specific and convincing evidence.

Experience

If you have extensive experience, some of it unrelated to your objective, use two subsections: related and additional.

Use your most important and relevant experience to convince the employer that you have the skills necessary to do the job. In this section articulate your accomplishments clearly and concisely using active voice to present evidence of your skills.

Optional information

You can include professional and extracurricular affiliations and activities, honors and awards, and sports.

Items to avoid

Keep references on a separate sheet and give to the employer when asked.
Omit your age, religious or political affiliations, marital status, or other personal data, which could be used to screen you out.

Formatting

Keep your resume to one page unless you have extensive related experience.
Organize headings so that the most important points are first.
Invite the readers' attention by using open space, wide margins, and bullets to set off text.
Use good quality white or off-white paper.
Use clear and dark 10-12 point type.
Spell and punctuate perfectly. Proofread several times.

Communication & Telephone Etiquette

General Guidelines

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December 2014

Outline

Communication General Guidelines

- ➢ **Introduction**
- ➢ **Major Elements in Conveying a message**

  - ▪ First Impression
  - ▪ Body Language
  - ▪ Tone of Voice
  - ▪ Cultural Diversity
  - ▪ Dealing with Colleagues
  - ▪ Dealing with Patients/Customers
    - ➢ *Role Plays*
    - ➢ *Face to Face Dealing*
      - ▪ Greeting
      - ▪ Listening/Body of Conversation
      - ▪ Time Expectation/Explanation
      - ▪ Thank You (The Closing)

- ➢ **Communication Styles**

Telephone Etiquette General Guidelines

- ➢ **Most Frequent Callers' Complaints**
- ➢ **Steps of a call handling**

  - ▪ Greeting
  - ▪ Body of Call/Explanation
  - ▪ Transferring a Call
  - ▪ Taking a Message
  - ▪ Putting the Caller on Hold
  - ▪ Thank You (the closing)

- ➢ **Handling Difficult People/Callers**
- ➢ **Conclusion**

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Introduction

- The Front line staff are the first *point of contact* to most customers. Consequently, they are the first to affect and impact:

  - ✓ The quality of customer *experience*
  - ✓ The level of customer *satisfaction/retention*
  - ✓ The *image/reputation* of the institution.

- Thus, although etiquette, professional communication, courtesy and empathy are considered *"soft skills"*, they are vitally important to:

  - ✓ The remarkable and memorable *patient experience* we aim to provide to our community.
  - ✓ The successful *conduct* of our medical practice.

Introduction

- A common frustration that our patients share with us is the *lack of consistency* they encounter when dealing with our Staff.

- Therefore, we have set the following guidelines and recommendations to:

  - ✓ Build *consistency* in our dealing

  - ✓ Help you provide and maintain *professional* customer relationships

  - ✓ Grow and enrich our *patient's experience*

- Setting guidelines is essential but sticking to them in our daily practice is the key for success.

- **Remember! Customers return because they like their past experience with us.**

Communication General Guidelines
Major Elements in Conveying a Message

In his studies, **_Prof. Albert Mehrabian_**, comes to two conclusions:

- There are basically three elements in any face-to-face communication which account differently in the customer interpretation and perception :

  Words 7%

  Tone of Voice 38%

  Body Language 55%

  These are often abbreviated as the "3 Vs.: *Verbal - Vocal - Visual*.

- According to the (7% - 38% - 55%) Rule, if words disagree with the tone of voice and nonverbal behavior, people tend to believe the tonality and nonverbal behavior

7%

55%

38%

● Body Language   ● Words   ● Tone of Voice
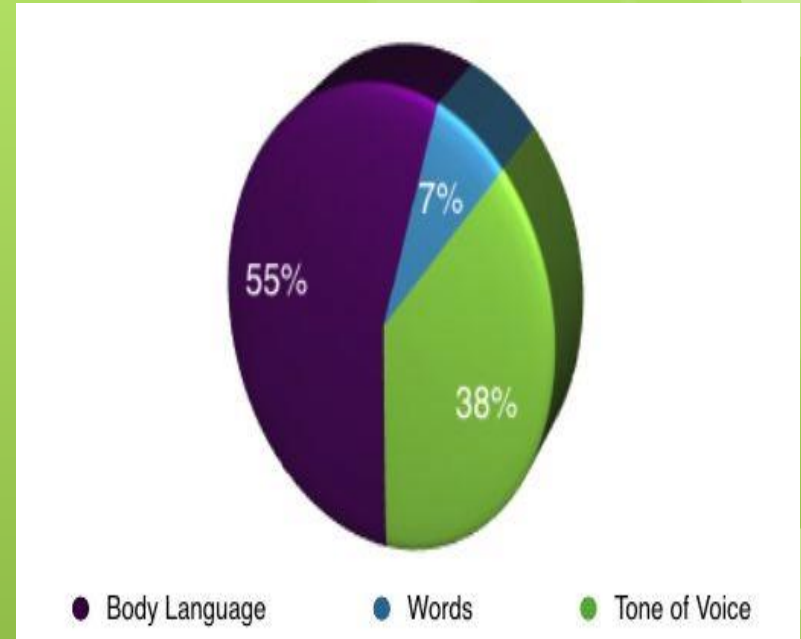
Elements in Conveying a Message: The Mehrabian Study
http://www.bowdonmedia.com/mehrab.html

Communication General Guidelines
First Impression

- When you are dealing with patients, etiquette and communication skills are the **key** contributors to projecting an excellent **first** impression.

- People you come in contact with will assess you by:

  - ➢ How you dress

  - ➢ Your personal grooming

  - ➢ Your body language

  - ➢ Your courtesy level

  - ➢ Your communication skills

  - ➢ Your confidence about the info provided

- Thus, adherence to dress code terms, displaying a professional look, and demonstrating a positive and friendly attitude are fundamentals to draw the initial frame of **your** professional image as well as the image **of the institution.**

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Communication General Guidelines
First Impression

- **Dress code:**

  - ➤ **AUB Identification badges** and nametags are to be worn **at all times**.

  - ➤ **Full attire of Uniforms** are to be worn **at all times**; no other alternatives allowed.

  - ➤ Appropriate **professional** clothing for staff where no uniform is required (i.e. no jeans, no tights, no sleeveless or tank tops, no open shoes, no sport or tennis shoes etc…)

  - ➤ Our dress should always be **tidy** (clean and ironed, etc…)

  - ➤ Our shoes should always be **clean and shiny** and of **plain black color**.

  - ➤ Out hair **must** always be **clean and neatly styled/trimmed** (tied long hair is highly recommended for ladies).

  - ➤ Wild haircuts, wet looks, **unusual & flashy hair colors** are not allowed.

  - ➤ Good grooming and **personal hygiene** is expected at all times (i.e. use of deodorant, dental hygiene, oil free hair, and trimmed light beard, moustache and Goatee for gentlemen).

  - ➤ Light perfume and make up **are recommended**.

  - ➤ **Non-distracting** jewelry and accessories. **Visible pins and symbols** are forbidden; men to restrict to wedding rings only if applicable.

  - ➤ Nails must always be clean, neat and of a **decent length**.

  - ➤ Chipped nail polish, **flashy colors** and **unusual designs** are not acceptable (i.e. Red, White, French or Clear are highly advisable.)

  - ➤ Body piercing and tattoos **are not allowed** and highly discouraged.

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Communication General Guidelines
First Impression - Examples

A must: A chewing gum is always *__inappropriate__*

A fact: **_Attitude_** is a _small_ thing that makes a **big** difference

"*Professional Staff* who are always *ready to help* and *happy to serve*"

Effective Tool: A smile is almost *always* appropriate.

Communication General Guidelines
Body Language

▪Recognizing and interpreting **"body language" (55%)** may differ from one person to another knowing that people have different **perspectives** and views and different **cultures**.

▪Eye contact, posture, facial expressions, hand gestures, etc… can sometimes give clues to the customer and employee alike.

▪Equally, a listener who does not make eye contact can give the speaker the impression that the listener is **bored** or **not paying attention**.

Body Language - Examples

▪ *Eye Contact:* (for 7-10 seconds)

Acknowledging people and maintaining eye contact turn the conversation into a mutual satisfaction and reflect high level of *respect* and *consideration*.

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Communication General Guidelines
Body Language - Examples

- ***Facial Expressions:***

   A frowning face may give the wrong message though you are using the appropriate and friendly tone of voice. Thus, we have to be ware of our facial expression at all times.

Remember we are not alone at the front desk, the patients/customers are there as well…

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Communication General Guidelines
Body Language - Examples

- **_Body Posture:_**

The body posture can tell a lot which may affect hugely **_your_** image. It either reflects a depressed, worried and hesitant person or a confident, reliable, professional, and proud one.

- ### *Hands' Gestures:*

    Same goes for hands' gestures and positioning, these may insinuate a *defensive* and *confrontational* attitude.

Thus, being ware of our body gestures is very critical in affecting both the image projected and message delivered to our patients.

Communication General Guidelines
Tone of Voice

- ***Tone of voice** (38%)* plays a major role in getting a message across. It is very useful in expressing emotions or opinions.

- Interpreting the ***"Tone of Voice"*** may differ from one person to another knowing that people have different ***moods*** and ***preferences*** and favors different ***styles***.

- The tone of voice can tell a lot; its ***volume, gravity, softness, appropriateness***, etc… may all lead to relaying a totally different message than our real and actual intentions, if wrongly used.

Tone of Voice - Examples

Example 1:

It may reflect a bored, worried, depressed , hesitant, and overwhelmed person.

<u>*Example 2:*</u>

It may as well reflect an aggressive, loud, and angry and impatient person.

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Example 3:

Or, it may reflect a caring, respectful, *humane* person who *values* his role and *enjoys* helping others and demonstrates a confident, reliable, professional and *proud attitude*.

Communication General Guidelines
Cultural Diversity

- Business etiquette and appropriate communication vary in different cultures.

- Employees should always be attentive to the *cultural sensitivity* when dealing with internal or external customers.

- This might require modifying the way you *greet* people and the *wordings* and *body language* that are appropriate to use in a conversation according to the population we serve.

- Attend to customers needs in the **most** comforting language to put him/her at ease.

- If you feel incapable of handling a specific language, please **refer to your colleagues or your supervisor** to provide you with the right assistance.

- However, when dealing with an Arabic speaking patient, other than Lebanese, you have to **slow down**, **listen carefully** and **take your time** while **explaining** using an *appropriate clear tone of voice*.

- Same goes for dealing with people from different nationality, race, and traditions. *Labeling* and *discrimination* will not be tolerated at all.

- Our role is to appreciate this richness and provide all our customers with an *equal respectful* service.

- Communicating with colleagues is a vital skill yet some people think that it goes **_unnoticed_**; this is totally **_untrue_**.

- Exercising the right behaviors and living the values **_among each other_** is the first step towards displaying our professional image.

- **_Seniors_** with their experience and exposure in the field of customer service along with their maturity level should serve as **_"role models"_** to others in demonstrating the exemplary image and complying with service excellence standards.

So, always look for ways to make each other look good. In the end, everything ends up in front of the customer!

Communication General Guidelines
Dealing with Colleagues - Examples
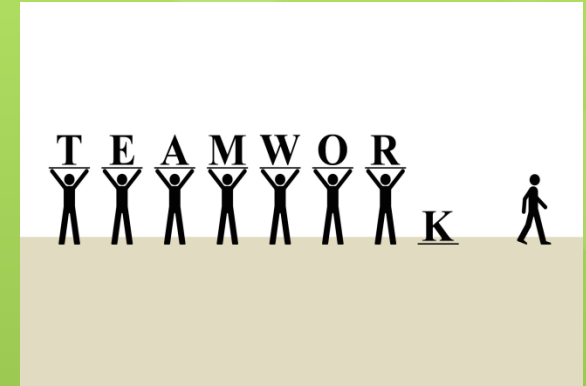
- Cooperation among you reflects **professionalism**, dedication and commitment to your work and patients; and helps you overcome any barrier that blocks your way towards achieving your common goal.

- *Teamwork* VS *Team Spirit*

➢ *Teamwork* is a part of our role and a must at times. However, in a front line role this is **_crucial_** to display one unified, consistent professional image.

➢ In some jobs teamwork is not required to get the job done, yet the *team spirit* is always a must to create a positive, harmonious, and caring work environment.

➢ Your *"teamwork"* plays a part of your performance evaluation, yet your "*team spirit"* is what **_distinguishes_** you as customer oriented person from the rest, and plays a role towards your appreciation and recognition.

Communication General Guidelines
Dealing with Patients/Customers

- ***Role Plays***

  - Multiple Scenarios

  - 2 Volunteers for each scenario

  - Characters:

    - Patient

    - Physician

    - Clinic Assistant/Nurse

  - Remaining of the group will serve as a "jury" to note negative/positive points displayed and recommend improvements

  - Group Discussion

Communication General Guidelines
Dealing with Patients/Customers

Face to Face Dealing

▪ Greeting

  ➢ Welcome customers with a **courteous smile** and a friendly **eye contact**; be the first to show that you care. "Do not allow anyone to feel ignored."

  ➢ If you're on the phone, **acknowledge** patient presence by making the eye contact and make your call brief to attend to the presented patient/visitor.

  ➢ A **consistent** opening statement should precede any conversation:
  > **i.e.** "Good Morning/Good Afternoon, how may I help you?"

  ➢ **NO** **eating**, **chewing** or **drinking** is permissible at front desk or while addressing people .

Communication General Guidelines
Dealing with Patients/Customers

Face to Face Dealing *(Cont.)*

- Listening/Body of Conversation

  - Always use **key words** in your conversation such as "Please", "Thank you", "If you don't mind"; this will emphasize the politeness in your communication.

  - Use patient's name whenever possible in the conversation.

    <u>Example:</u> Ms. Laham, when was your last visit to our clinics?

  - Be sure to use a **clear voice** with the **right articulation** that allows every word to be understood.

  - If your information is misunderstood, you may not have the opportunity to correct it before it escalates into a problem.

Face to Face Dealing (Cont.)

- Listening/Body of Conversation *(cont.)*

  - ➤ Be concise using a straightforward language.

  - ➤ When you answer a question make sure ***the answer is understood*** before moving on in the conversation.

  - ➤ Present your data in a ***confident tone*** this helps adding credibility and value to your information and shows that you master the ***info*** presented.

Face to Face Dealing *(Cont.)*

- Listening/Body of Conversation *(cont.)*

  ➢ Always focus on presenting your information in a **_professional_** manner instead of an **_emotional_** one.

    Examples:

    Address people with: Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., Sir, Madame, Monsieur, 7adertac, etc…

    Avoid: Habibi, Ya 3ayni, Hayete, Honey, Dear, Hajje, Tante, 3ammo, Hakim, Inta, Inte, etc…

    To confirm use: Yes, Sure, Of course, Definitely, etc..

    Avoid: OK, Yeah, Aha, Eh, etc…

Communication General Guidelines
Dealing with Patients/Customers

Face to Face Dealing (Cont.)

- Listening/Body of Conversation

  - Present your dialogue in a **_conversational_** tone to encourage interaction, rather than **_dictating_** or **_instructing_** tone that may reflects discourtesy in your approach.

  - Example: Ms. Laham forgot to bring her Hospital ID Card to the appointment.
    - It is not acceptable to say:

    How many times, I told you "Madame" to bring your Hospital Card (i.e. Blue Card) with you? You should have it with you at all times.

    - Instead you may say:

    Not a problem Ms. Laham, please allow me few seconds to check the information on the system.
    - At check out, you may remind the patient if needed:

    Ms. Laham, I appreciate if you may bring your Blue Card with you for your next visit; it is the hospital practice to check the hard copy each time we receive a patient. Thank you.

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Face to Face Dealing (Cont.)

- Time Expectation/Explanation

  ➢ Open and complete communication with patients is expected at all times in the event a wait is necessary. Update them on a regular basis and apologize for the delay.

  Example:

  - Ms. Laham, I am sorry to keep you waiting, the doctor will be with you shortly.

  - I truly understand your concern and I apologize for the delay, but the Doctor had to attend to an unpredicted matter.

  ➢ Always *avoid* giving a precise waiting time if not sure of it.

  ➢ Always explain what is the next step, keeping patient informed will ease his waiting time.

  Example:

  - Ms. Laham, please have a seat, our Nurse, will be with you shortly (this is when an assessment is needed, depending on purpose of visit.)

  Or:

  - Ms. Laham, the Doctor is currently with a patient, kindly have a seat and I will be calling you when he is ready to examine you.

Communication General Guidelines
Dealing with Patients/Customers

Face to Face Dealing (cont.)

▪Time Expectation/Explanation *(cont.)*

➢ Once you escort or direct the patient to the examination room, explain what will happen after the examination is completed:

Example:

- Ms. Laham, the Doctor is ready to see you now, please proceed to room number "3" first door to your left.

- And Ms. Laham, once you are done with the doctor kindly stop by my desk to finalize your paper work.

Communication General Guidelines
Dealing with Patients/Customers

Face to Face Dealing (cont.)

- Thank You (The Closing)

  - ➢ Do not let people's gratitude go unnoticed; acknowledge it at all times, and close by saying: "My Pleasure, Salemtak, You're Welcome."

  - ➢ With a **_SMILE_**

Communication General Guidelines
Styles

Passive	Aggressive	Assertive
Are afraid to speak up	**Interrupt and talk over people**	**Speak openly and respectfully**
Speak very softly	**Speak loudly**	**Use a conversational tone**
Avoid looking at people	**Glare and stare at other people**	**Make non-threatening, good eye contact**
Show little or no expression	**Intimidate others with their expressions**	**Show expressions appropriate to the message**
Slouch and withdraw	**Stand rigidly, arms crossed and invade others' personal space**	**Relax and adopt an open posture and expression**
Isolate themselves from groups as much as possible	**Control group interaction**	**Participate in groups**
Agree with others, despite what they really may feel	**Only consider their own feelings and demand others do too**	**Speak openly to the point or issue being discussed**
Value themselves less than others	**Value themselves more than others**	**Value themselves equally with others**
Hurt themselves to avoid hurting others	**Hurt others to avoid being hurt themselves**	**Try not to hurt anyone, including themselves**
Don't reach their goals and may not even know what they are	**Reach their goals but hurt others in the process**	**Usually reach their goals without alienating others**
You're OK. I'm not	**I'm OK. You're not**	**I'm OK. You're OK**

Telephone Etiquette General Guidelines

➤ **Most Frequent Callers' Complaints**

➤ **Steps of a call handling**

- Cycle of complete call
- Greeting
- Body of Call/Explanation
- Transferring a Call
- Taking a Message
- Putting the Caller on Hold
- Thank You (The closing)

➤ **Handling Difficult People/Callers**

Telephone Etiquette General Guidelines
Most Frequent Callers' Complaints

- The telephone rings for a *long time* before it is answered; and sometimes not answered at all.

- They answer with an *aggravated* voice, as if I *disturbed* them by calling.

- They're *not cheerful*, they always seem unhappy with what they do.

- They *suddenly* place me on hold *without notifying* me, not knowing what's going on.

- They get *offensive* when I ask *"Who am I talking to?"* or simply *refuse* to give me their *names*.

- They don't *clearly listen* to my needs before they transfer me to the wrong person.

- Sometimes they *disconnect me* while transferring my call.

- They told me to call back, but *never* gave me a name, an extension or a division to ask for.

- The person says, *"Wait"* and then talks to other co-workers without putting me *on hold* where I can hear their small talk.

- *Greeting*

➢ Smile! callers can feel it ; *It's true*. It can impact your tone of voice. Let's Try It…

Say good morning in two ways:

- First, without a smile

- And now, with a smile

You'll notice:

- There's a nuance when you smile which gives your voice energy and a cheery tone.

- And that voice nuance conveys friendliness to the person at the other end of the line.

Telephone Etiquette General Guidelines
Steps of a call handling

▪ *Greeting* (cont.)

➢ Have a ***proper posture*** and take a deep breath, this will help take the tension out of your voice.

➢ Respond ***promptly*** and speak ***clearly***.

➢ Be ***courteous***; treat callers as ***you*** like to be treated and as ***they*** expect to be treated.

➢ ***Welcome*** customers, and ***state*** your name. It's always comforting to the caller to know who he's talking to.

➢ A ***consistent*** opening statement should precede any conversation.

Example:

Good Morning/Good Afternoon, (Family Medicine), Linda's speaking, How may I help you?

Telephone Etiquette General Guidelines
Steps of a call handling

- *Greeting (cont.)*

➢ Be conscious of ***noise*** around you which might affect the clarity of call.

➢ Refrain from speaking on the phone when ***eating*** or ***chewing***.

➢ Refrain from opening a ***side talk*** with colleagues when the caller is still on line, this may confuse him/her and make him/her angry.

➢ ***Never*** let the caller feel that he/she is a ***burden***. We need to know that this caller is the ***reason*** of our work and not an ***interruption*** to it.

➢ Always show ***accountability*** towards your customers, they expect to come ***first*** and we ***should*** put them first.

▪ *Body Of Call/Explanation*

➢ Listen carefully; without interrupting the patient and do not draw a conclusion until all info has been presented. "Rudeness is never acceptable."

➢ Follow well-structured questions, lead the discussion and be the first to give the patient the complete info.

➢ Focus on collecting the essential info and fully/promptly document all the details on the system.

➢ Evaluate the type and urgency of call by asking valid questions.

➢ If you need additional time to investigate the patient request, notify the caller of your next step.

- *Body Of Call/Explanation* (cont.)

  ➢ When giving an appointment, be specific and always check with the patient his/her preference and if date/time are suitable for him/her.

    <u>Example:</u>

    Instead of saying: "When would you like to come?"

    You may say: "Ms. Laham, Dr. X is available on Tuesdays and Thursdays, do you prefer mornings or afternoons?"

▪ *Body Of Call/Explanation* *(cont.)*

➢ Once you completed the discussion, summarize final decision/agreement reached to the patient:

Example:

Great; then Ms. Laham, your appointment with Dr. X is on Tuesday, December 16 at 3:30 pm.

➢ If this is the first time the patient visits Dr. X, immediately proceed to giving him/her the exact location of the clinic, with clear directions and valid indicators:

Example:

The clinic is located on the second floor of Sawwaf Building; it's the building facing the visitors' parking on Clemenceau street.

- *Body Of Call/Explanation (cont.)*

  ➢ In some cases, patients insist to talk to their Physician who at times is not available;

    Do not say:

    "The doctor is busy, you can't talk to him/her now"

    It would be better if you say:

    "I am sorry, the doctor is currently with a patient, may I take the message and we will return your call as soon as possible."

  ➢ In other cases, you don't always haves all the answers; it is not a problem; the ***unacceptable*** is to mislead the patient/caller by making guesses. Offer to put them on hold to consult with a colleague or the appropriate person for the right data.

- *Body Of Call/Explanation* *(cont.)*

  ➢ Present your dialogue in a __*conversational*__ tone to encourage interaction, rather than __*confrontational*__ tone that may causes an argument and imposes pressure on customers.

  __*Example 1:*__ **(Conversational Tone – 2 Volunteers)**

  __*Example 2:*__ **(Confrontational Tone – 2 Volunteers)**

Telephone Etiquette General Guidelines
Steps of a call handling

- *Transferring a Call*

    If you need to transfer the call, always make sure to:

    ➢ Explain to the caller why the call is being transferred.

    ➢ Inform the caller where and to whom you are forwarding his/her call (give the name/ext. *when appropriate*).

    ➢ Sometimes accidents happen… especially during high volume times. Give the caller the appropriate number/ext., so he/she can try again in case of a disconnection or no answer.

    ➢ Stay on line until the desired person picks up.

    ➢ Describe the caller's needs to the second person before releasing the call so they do not have to repeat themselves.

    ➢ If no answer, offer to take a message.

- *Transferring a Call* (cont.)

Example:

During your conversation you found out that the person should be speaking to the nurse:

- **Employee:** Ms. Laham, since it's a clinical info that you need, I will have to transfer you to the nurse in charge to help you better. Please stay on line with me while I transfer you.

- **Caller:** Sure, Thank you

- **Employee:** You're welcome (transfer and stay on line, if the nurse doesn't answer).

    Sorry to keep you waiting Ms. Laham, the nurse seems to be busy with another patient; I will leave her the message to call you back (and immediately do so)

- **Caller:** Thank you, you're very helpful.

- **Employee:** My pleasure and thank you for calling.

▪ *Taking a Message*

If the caller would prefer to leave a message, be sure that it is promptly conveyed to the appropriate person by noting the following:

➢ The caller's full name and contact number ***where*** he/she may be reached.

➢ A concise, ***accurate*** message (e.g. reason and description of concern and/or inquiry)

➢ The ***urgency*** of the call.

➢ ***When*** he/she may be reached for a return call.

➢ ***Sign*** the message with your name, the date and time of call so any questions can be directed to you.

➢ Ensure that a ***follow up*** has been made as promised to the caller.

▪ *Putting The Caller On Hold*

It is preferable not to put a customer on hold unless it is absolutely necessary. However ,if need be, make sure you do the following:

➢ Obtain permission of caller for putting him/her on hold.

➢ Explain how long you expect to be away from the telephone.

➢ If you are longer than expected, always check back with the caller to reassure him/her.

➢ Ask if he/she would prefer to call them back by a certain time.

➢ Always thank the caller for holding.

Example:

▪ Employee: Ms. Laham, could you please hold for few seconds?
▪ Caller:　　Sure, I'll hold　or　No thank you I will call back.
▪ Employee: Thank you for holding　or　Thank you and sorry for the inconvenience.

Telephone Etiquette General Guidelines
Steps of a call handling

- Thank You (Closing)

  ➢ Once the service is completed, be certain that the patient is satisfied by asking:

  "Sir/Madam, is there anything else I can assist you with?"

  ➢ Always acknowledge people's gratitude and close by saying: "My pleasure and thank you for calling"

Handling Difficult People/Callers

- ***Handling Difficult People***

- ➢ We often hear this famous statement:

    "The Customer Is Always Right".

    Well, this is not always true !!!

- ➢ There are times where we are faced with difficult and demanding customers, ***but*** our role is to ***absorb*** them and control them rather then letting them control us.

Handling Difficult People/Callers

When in this situation, our aim is to prevent our conversation from escalating to a **_complaint_** or making a **_public scene_**; therefore, the key for handling these cases will start by doing the following:

➢ Be always ready to **_accept_** any remarks or comments.

➢ Believe that **_none_** of this is **_personal_**; this will change your perception towards the issue and will help you handle it in a calm and rational manner.

➢ Focus on **_controlling_** the situation and **_solving_** the issue rather than getting back to the customer and proving your point or proving him/her wrong.

Handling Difficult People/Callers

➢ Start by ***apologizing*** to ease the patient's anger, and move on to lead the conversation to where you want: "Calming the patient down the fastest possible"; and be the owner of the ***solution*** not the ***problem***.

➢ Be the patient advocate by ***listening carefully*** and ***sympathizing*** with him/her; acknowledging his/her concerns to recognize the key initiator of the issue and try to tackle it.

➢ Proceed by ***accepting*** the responsibility.

➢ And show your will and ***preparedness to help*** him/her.

This is what we call the **ASAP** model (**A**pologize, **S**ympathize, **A**ccept responsibility and **P**repare to help)

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Handling Difficult People/Callers

If not convinced,

➢ Try to walk the patient out of the crowd and get the patient to a closed office if possible by saying:

"I totally understand your concern, but for your privacy, I would appreciate if we can discuss the issue further in the office."

➢ Reassure the patient and let him/her know that you called for supervisor to attend to his needs and ***immediately*** do so.

➢ When ***out of control***, do not allow much time before calling your immediate supervisor, or any other senior member who has the expertise in these cases.

➢ It is difficult to stay polite all the times, especially during the high volume periods. ***But again***,

➢ ***always*** remember before reacting that your attitude and behavior reflect on ***you*** first, on your ***department*** and most importantly on ***AUBMC*** as a whole .

Handling Difficult People/Callers

- **Handling Difficult Callers**

  - Remain calm.

  - Do not become defensive, recognizing that the caller is not angry with you personally.

  - Listen to what he/she is saying, demonstrating that you care and want to help.

  - Never let your final response be "I don't know" or "call back later" without some resolution to the needs of the caller.

  - Do not say anything that might provoke the caller i.e. "It's not my mistake, I can't do anything for you."

  - Instead you may say: "I am sorry for the bad encounter, but allow me to try and help you. Can you please tell me what seems to be the problem so that I can attend to it accordingly?"

  - Remember, you are speaking to a **_customer_**.

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Finally,

Share your experience with your colleagues and supervisor regularly and during meetings to:

- Brainstorm and come up with ideas to avoid recurrence.

- Learn from each others' experience.

- Allow yourself to ventilate.

Conclusion

- Our medical practice is all about **"who we serve".** Therefore, having the *passion to serve* others, and choosing your *attitude* towards doing it, is crucial to **your** success and the success of our practice.

- The trick is figuring out what our customers want and then making sure they get it. It is those **special or extra** things you do that make people **happy**.

A reality…

"People talk about great experiences, but *great experiences* are *grown just like plants*…"

Thus, to our patients:

Being *professional* is like treasuring when we can't praise and,

Being *compassionate* is like healing when we can't cure…

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Questions?

Thank You...

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Listening and Interpersonal Skills Review

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1   Overview

This paper offers the non-subject specialist an overview of the literature which has influenced the development of listening and interpersonal skills in UK higher education. It refers to articles, seminal texts and writers within the field. In order to provide some context, the first section of the review covers some issues relating to the definition of listening and interpersonal skills and some examples are presented to demonstrate their interdependence. The importance of these skills within occupational and educational domains is also highlighted.

The review then goes on to place listening and interpersonal skills in context by exploring historical perspectives, factors influencing current developments and providing an indication of issues which may affect future development. The paper introduces different approaches to listening and interpersonal skills within some key disciplines and considers the extent to which the teaching and learning of listening and interpersonal skills has been integrated within these discipline. In conclusion we consider emerging themes relating to advances in technology and widening participation, including the cross cultural agenda.

A glance at the definitions section below will reveal the substantial overlap that exists between this topic and some of the other LearnHigher learning areas, most notably those relating to oral communications and group work. Although we acknowledge this overlap at various points during the review, readers interested in a more depth overview should explore the resources available on the LearnHigher website (www.learnhigher.ac.uk last visited 11/6/07)

2   Definitions and features of listening and interpersonal skills

2.1   Defining listening and interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills can be defined broadly as "those skills which one needs in order to communicate effectively with another person or a group of people" (Rungapadiachy, 1999, p.193). Although there is some variation in the literature over the exact skills that qualify under this heading (Chant, Jenkinson, Randle and Russell, 2002), most authors (e.g. Rungapadiachy, 1999; Hargie and Dickson, 2004; Hargie, 1997; Hayes, 2002) tend to agree on a number of core areas in which competency is essential for effective interpersonal interactions. These include the following:

Self-awareness: Self-awareness is considered to be a pre-requisite for the type of "other-awareness" or empathy assumed to underlie effective communication (Hayes, 2002).

Effective listening: The ability to listen effectively is a core skill in a range of interpersonal situations (see Bostrom, 1997). Some of the features that underpin effective listening and its role in oral communication are explored in more detail in section 2.2.

Questioning: The ability to use questions that maximise the amount of relevant (relative to irrelevant) information that is gathered in an exchange, serves to enhance the communicative efficiency of the interaction (Hayes, 2002).

Oral communication: Some of the processes involved in effective oral presentations are explored in section 2.2 below and as noted above, the topic of oral communication is addressed in greater depth by the corresponding LearnHigher learning area.

Helping or facilitating: Being effective at helping others is considered (e.g. Hayes, 2002; Rungapadiachy, 1999) an important aspect of interpersonal competence. Ideas about helping behaviour from Humanistic psychology have also had an important influence in terms of generating research and developments in the area of interpersonal skills teaching, an issue which is explored further in section 4.2.

Reflecting: Another skill that is closely related to the psychological sciences or counselling more specifically is the ability to reflect or present reflections. Hargie and Dickson (2004, p.148) define reflections as "statements in the interviewer's own words that encapsulate and re-present the essence of the interviewee's own words". Presenting reflections during interactions can serve a similar information gathering function to that seen in questioning.

Assertiveness: Being assertive is an important interpersonal skill for interactions in all domains. Asserting oneself can serve many different communicative functions including allowing the expression of views clearly and openly and the avoidance of negative conflicts (see Hargie and Dickson, 2004).

Non-verbal communications: A number of communicative activities also involve non-verbal behaviour and an ability to detect and portray messages through this medium is also seen as a central interpersonal skill (Harrigan, Rosenthal and Scherer, 2005). Messages can be communicated through the following non-verbal channels:

1. *Facial expressions:* Ekman's work in the area of facial expressions (e.g. Ekman, 1992) provides solid evidence that information about an individual's emotional state can be transmitted via their facial expression. In addition, facial expressions can be used to regulate interactions, for example the synchronisation of conversations (Hayes, 2002).

2. *Gaze:* Emotion information can also be communicated through gaze. For example, long stares are often seen as signals of hostility or aggression. Looking can also be used to initiate and regulate interpersonal interactions and can be used to assess the reactions of others during oral presentations and conversations (Hayes, 2002).

3. *Gestures:* Gestures can be used to replace words, in addition to words to place emphasis on an element of a verbal message, or to regulate or signal the beginning or end of an interaction (Ekman and Friesen, 1969, cited in Hayes, 2002).

4. *Posture:* An individual's posture can reveal how they feel and their attitude towards others involved in the interaction (Argyle, 1994). Posture also tends to vary as a function of how formal an interpersonal situation is with more relaxed postures indicating less formal situations (Hayes, 2002).

5. *Paralinguistic cues:* Non-verbal vocal cues such as the pitch, tone and speed of speech can also reveal information about emotional states and can be used to regulate interactions. For example, people experiencing anxiety tend to speak very quickly and in a high pitch (Scherer, 1981). Paralinguistic cues can also regulate turn-taking in interactions and pitch changes also indicate when questions have been asked.

2.2   The interdependence of listening and interpersonal skills

Although these skills or processes have been presented separately here, it is important to note that in real terms, there are very few situations in which they operate in isolation from each other. The interdependence of these various interpersonal skills is clearly demonstrated by examining in more detail some of the learning situations that students are likely to find themselves in during their higher education.

For example, while describing exercises that had been designed to enhance the development of communication skills in Geography undergraduates, Burkill, Corey and Healy (2000) noted that the

seemingly one-dimensional task of giving an oral presentation actually involves a range of different communication skills (both expressive and receptive) many of which fall within the interpersonal domain. In addition to presenting information orally, students must also engage in active listening and discussions as well as monitoring the reactions of their audience and responding appropriately to input from others. Similar skills also underpin effective lecture presentation by academics (Brown and Manogue, 2001). Non-verbal forms of communication also seen as crucial components of effective presenting and can influence the message conveyed by both academics in formal lectures situations (Brown and Manigue, 2001) and students during presentations (Burkill et al, 2000). In both types of situation, maintaining eye contact with the audience and adopting a posture appropriate for the context in which the talk is being given are qualities which are seen as desirable in speakers.

The interdependent nature of the various interpersonal skills becomes further apparent when the competencies that underpin individual interpersonal processes are considered. For example, many of the skills that researchers have identified as being central to effective listening extend far beyond the simple reception of auditory input. Rost (2002) argued that intentional listening (as opposed to "hearing") begins only after auditory inputs have been processed by the ear and have reached cortical areas of the brain. Similarly, Anderson and Lynch (1988) suggested that processes of active interpretation are involved in effective listening. The successful listener must extract meaning from the message they have received in order to produce a coherent interpretation of what has been said. In order to achieve this level of understanding, it is assumed (see for example White, 1998; Bostrom, 1997) that listeners must possess a willingness and ability to empathise with the speaker. In order to fully understand the message they must see things from the perspective of the sender which requires them to have a certain level of respect for and interest in others. This notion of empathic understanding is also a central principle of the Humanistic psychology movement that emerged in the 1970s and had a profound influence within the field of interpersonal communications (see section 3.2).

When discussing the components that underlie effective listening, it is difficult to separate out the influence of an individual's ability to detect and understand additional, non-language elements of the message (e.g. paralinguistic cues) or behavioural messages sent by the sender in the form of non-verbal communications. In face-to-face communicative situations, it is impossible to disentangle the verbal from the non-verbal influences on an individuals comprehension of a message and for this reason, some authors have suggested that definitions of listening be broadened to encompass the receipt of behavioural messages in addition to auditory messages (see for example Feyten, 1991; Bostrom, 1997). Again then this discussion should reinforce the overlapping and inter-related nature of various core interpersonal and listening skills.

Given the clear relationships between these different interpersonal skills, it is not surprising to note that an individual's level of competence in a specific skill area can exert an influence on how effectively they perform other interpersonal tasks. For example, remaining with the topics of oral communication and effective listening, Anderson and Lynch (1988) described research conducted by their team (Anderson, Brown and Yule, 1984), in which they found that the ability of learners to convey an oral message to others was dependent on how much previous experience they had had of *listening* to a similar type of message. This performance overlap further cements the idea that core interpersonal skills operate together and develop in an interactive fashion.

3 Why are listening and interpersonal skills important?

3.1 Listening and interpersonal skills enhance employability

As the UK government's employability agenda has gained momentum over the last 10 years or so, the issue of identifying which skills are valued most highly in the modern workplace has become increasingly important (see for example Harvey, 2003; Burkill et al 2000). In attempting to address this question, Hargie (1997) argued that competence in the majority of professions relies on the implementation of 3 sets of skills. He termed these "cognitive skills" (the knowledge base of the particular profession), "technical skills" (ability to use any specialised equipment etc necessary) and "social or communication skills" (including an individuals ability to perform well in interpersonal settings). More recently, Harvey (2003) made a similar suggestion on the basis of his review of the literature and concluded that there seems to be a general

consensus amongst UK employers that, irrespective of the specific degree courses they have followed, a core set of "interactive" (interpersonal and communication) skills should be evidenced by their graduate employees.

A number of other findings that have resulted from enquiries relating to what employees want from graduates have also suggested that interpersonal skills, including listening are highly valued. For example, Maes, Weldy and Icengole (1997) developed a questionnaire measure that would allow employers to indicate which criteria they felt were most important when evaluating graduate recruits. They distributed the measure to 500 managers of American companies from a wide range of occupational sectors and found that oral communication was consistently identified as the most important competency sought by employers. Breaking this down further, the second study reported by these authors suggested that within the domain of oral communication, these managers considered the skills of listening, following instructions and conversational skills to be the most important and most frequently used within their businesses. Clearly then, elements that fall under the umbrella of interpersonal and listening skills are found to be highly desirable by employers.

The influence of an individual's level of competency when it comes to listening and interpersonal skills has also been shown to extend well beyond the recruitment stage of employment. For example, Zorn and Violanti (1996) sampled across three different companies and found that employees with better communication related abilities also had higher level jobs, had displayed greater upward mobility within the company, and earned higher salaries (in both absolute terms and also when age was taken into account). When discussing the ingredients necessary for career success in the information technology sector, Stevens (2005) also identified the ability to communicate effectively as being the most important competency. This was despite acknowledgement of the fact that great emphasis is placed on technological skill within this sector.

Based on this evidence, it seems reasonable to suggest that the development of good listening and interpersonal skills during higher education should enhance employability amongst graduates across disciplines. The government agenda which evolved from the Dearing report (NCIHE, 1997) requires universities to address these skills and competencies (see Section 4)

3.2   Listening and interpersonal skills are fundamental to effective learning

It is also important to note that listening and interpersonal skills are fundamental to the process of learning itself (e.g. Burkill et al, 2000). For this reason, long before considerations relating to employability become salient, interpersonal and listening skills will play a vital role in an individual's education ;many of the learning situations that higher education students are exposed to rely heavily on these types of skill.

Formal lectures remain the most common method of teaching and as such comprise a substantial part of the university learning experience (Brown and Manogue, 2001). In order for students to learn successfully in a lecture situation, many of the skills associated with effective listening that have been reviewed above are required. In addition, the growing emphasis on student-focussed teaching methods in higher education has meant that the development of interpersonal and listening skills has become even more central to the university learning experience. De La Harpe, Radloff and Wyber (2000) noted that learning situations that involve discussions or group work, or require students to reflect on their own learning serve to enhance skills relating to oral communication, listening and self-awareness which are important components of interpersonal competence.

This type of overlap between the encouragement of active learning and the development of interpersonal skills is also seen in activities explicitly developed to enhance students' communication skills. The "fishbowl" discussion exercise described by Smart and Featheringham (2006) requires students to either engage in active discussion about a business-related issue within a group or observe and evaluate their peers doing so. The researchers point out that in addition to encouraging business undergraduates to develop their communication skills (the purpose for which it was originally designed), the exercise also represents a situation in which students are allowed to teach and learn from each other. This type of peer interaction during learning has been associated with the promotion of a deep level of learning and understanding (Anderson, Howe, Soden, Halliday and Low, 2001).

The views of Stammers, Dittmar and Henney (1999) are also consistent with this suggestion as they noted that the introduction of skills teaching in addition to the teaching of academic subject knowledge on their political sciences course at the University of Sussex had enabled a "pedagogy of academic, personal and interpersonal development designed to facilitate deep, active and reflective learning" (p.116).

The evidence reviewed in this section highlights the importance of listening and interpersonal skills in both the occupational and educational domain. Development of these skills should enable students to learn more effectively during their time at university and the integration of skills teaching should also help to encourage a deep level of learning. In addition, this type of training should enhance the employability of students upon graduation.

4 Listening and Interpersonal Skills within Higher Education: A historical perspective

4.1 The situation before the Dearing report

Until the fairly recent publication of the Dearing report (NCIHE, 1997) and the changes to the curriculum that resulted from it (see section 5:1 for more details), learning related to subject content was dominant, in all but a few vocationally orientated degrees. The same situation was mirrored in employment where, despite the wide-ranging value of developing the interpersonal and listening skills of employees, few professional training schemes addressed this area (Hargie, 1997).

Within the educational domain, some authors (e.g. Hyslop and Tone, 1988; Burkill et al, 2000) have suggested that this lack of emphasis on the development of such skills came from an assumption that they would develop naturally without the need for direct instruction. Interestingly, more recent research has suggested that this attitude is also held by some students. Rees, Sheard & McPherson (2002), found that medical students held both positive and negative attitudes to learning these types of skills. Although they accepted that good listening and interpersonal skills were vital to the success of a medical practitioner, they perceived them to be 'non-academic' and 'common sense'.

Despite this general climate, an emphasis on the importance of listening and interpersonal skills training has been evident in some disciplines long before the publication of the Dearing report (NCIHE, 1997). Some examples are explored in the following section.

4.2 Disciplines placing historical value on listening and interpersonal skills

Over the past 60 years the key influences in interpersonal skills literature have come from the ***psychological sciences***. The study of psychology is defined as "the scientific study of people, the mind and behaviour" (British Psychological Society website http://www.bps.org.uk/home-page.cfm last visited 10/06/07). Its many sub-divisions relate to different vocational areas (e.g. clinical, occupational, education, forensic, counselling) but most are heavily dependent on understanding and researching interpersonal relations and behaviour and the people skills which support this.

Much of the more recent theory underpinning these people orientated professions comes from the early work of Maslow (1943) who introduced many of the principles central to Humanistic psychology. This branch of psychology provided new ideas about human behaviour and awareness of oneself in the context of other people. Carl Rogers (1951, 1959, 1961) went on to develop a non-directive, client centred approach to therapy which built on these principles and encouraged self reflection. Rogerian Therapy helped establish amongst many things, the importance of effective interpersonal skills as these must be employed by counsellors in order to evidence empathy, respect and congruence or honesty with a client.

Such therapy orientated skills are now considered to provide a firm basis for any 'person centred relationship' and have been developed by many including Gerard Egan whose skilled helper model provides a framework which can be used to "help people become better at helping themselves in their everyday lives." (Egan, 2007, p8). Like many techniques originally developed to support professional interactions, the skills

of active listening and effective use of questioning that Egan (2007) emphasises are applicable far beyond the specific context of guidance or counselling and can be applied more widely in personal, occupational and educational domains.

Michael Argyle's work on interpersonal behaviour (1969) and his development of *social skills* training programmes served to raise awareness of the importance of these types of skills across a number of different subject areas. His ideas served as the foundation for many vocational training programmes in guidance, counselling and social work in the 1970's.

Healthcare studies (including medicine and nursing) had already acknowledge the importance of effective professional skills training, and continues to encourage new approaches to teaching interviewing and interpersonal skills to the present day (see for example Van Dalen, Bartholomeus, Kerkhofs, Lulofs, Van Thiel, Rethans et al, 2001; Chant et al, 2002). The importance of this issue within the healthcare studies can be evidenced by the large number of hits returned in response to searching for articles relating to this subject on the PubMed database: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Display&0 itool=abstractplus&dopt=pubmed_pubmed&from_uid=6700451 (last visited 06/06/2007)

Ideas about the significance of effective interpersonal skills were also recognised early on within *business and commercial environments* and throughout the 1960's academic management journals made frequent references to the importance of these attributes when looking for executives (Bryan, 1962). In addition, publications relating to the type of management games that could be used to improve the quality of interpersonal interactions began to appear (e.g. Dill and Doppelt, 1963). The historical development of interest in interpersonal skills within the management sector can also be seen in the work of Buckley, Peach and Weitzel (1989, cited in Maes et al, 1997) who compared the findings of two different studies to find out which attributes employers valued most highly when recruiting management graduates. In the first study (conducted in 1975) employers did not rate either oral or written communication skills in the top 5 important attributes. However, this situation had changed dramatically by 1983 when, in contrast to the 1975 finding, communication was revealed to be the skill most valued by employers.

In summary, the literature reviewed in this section reveals that an appreciation of the importance of listening and interpersonal skills, and attempts to integrate training of these skills has been apparent for many years in some key disciplines across both occupational and educational domains. Although many of the ideas discussed in this section stem from historical writings within the context of Humanistic psychology and counselling, their relevance to listening and interpersonal skills training in the present day is clear. Indeed, some recent authors (e.g. Chant et al, 2002) have described counselling skills as a communication "strategy", underpinned by a variety of more specific interpersonal skills.

5   Recent curriculum developments relating to listening and interpersonal skills

5.1   Background

It is clear from the previous section that listening and interpersonal skills training has been evident for many decades in disciplines where education and training for 'people orientated employment' has encouraged the application of theory into practise. However, as noted in section 3.1, training in these skills has traditionally been neglected by many higher education courses. This situation changed dramatically ten years ago with the publication of the Dearing report (NCIHE, 1997). The report and subsequent QAA Subject Benchmark standards (available to view at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp, last accessed 10/06/07) set out expectations of skill delivery across the entire higher education curriculum.

One implication of these interventions in the higher education curriculum is that designers of teaching and learning programmes are now expected to evidence how degrees produce graduates who can demonstrate *skills* based knowledge and competences. Stammers et al (1999) noted one consequence of the developments brought about by the Dearing report (NCIHE, 1997) is that:

"attention must be paid to the development of skills not traditionally associated with students' academic performance – most evidently a range of personal and interpersonal skills" (Stammers et al 1999, p.116)

The remainder of this section of the review will examine the factors that prompted the recommendations laid out in the Dearing report, provide some examples of subject benchmark statements relating to interpersonal skills in a selection of disciplines and finally touch briefly on the impact of personal development planning in the development of students' interpersonal skills.

5.2   Graduate skill deficits: A prompt for increased emphasis on skill development

The desire to produce graduates with the skills required by employers is seen as the major driving force behind the recommendations in the Dearing report (NCIHE, 1997) and the curriculum reforms that followed (Burkill et al, 2000). A substantial body of evidence suggests that there is a deficit between the skill levels that employers expect university graduates to posses, and those that are actually displayed. This issue is particularly salient when it comes to listening and interpersonal skills - despite growing indications that these are highly desired by employers (see section 2.1), evidence continues to suggest that employer requirements are not being met. A recent Guardian article (Ford, 2007) featured a report from the Association of Graduate Employers complaining about the lack of graduates with the appropriate combination of academic and "soft" skills.

Given the global nature of today's workplace, it is also important to note that the deficit between the skills employers want and what they actually find in graduates is not just restricted to the UK but is apparent world-wide (De Le Harpe et al, 2000) - the results of the Stevens (2005) survey of American employers found that they would like to see graduates who were better at oral presentation, and had better listening and interpersonal skills. Harvey (2003) pointed to similar discontent amongst UK employers.

5.3   Examples of subject benchmark statements across a variety of disciplines

A selection of bench mark statements are detailed below demonstrating how listening and interpersonal skills training is being delivered across the curriculum.

1) **Social Policy and Administration and Social Work**

- Listen actively to others, engage appropriately with the life experiences of service users, understand accurately their viewpoint and overcome personal prejudices to respond appropriately to a range of complex personal and interpersonal situations.

- Use both verbal and non-verbal cues to guide interpretation.

2) Theology

- Evidence empathy and the ability to have respect for others views.

3) Information Management

- Students should be able to interact effectively and impartially with individuals and groups in particular communities.

4) Communication and media students should be able to:

- Communicate effectively in inter-personal settings, in writing and in a variety of media.

- Work productively in a group or team, showing abilities at different times to listen, contribute and lead effectively.

5) Business and management degrees emphasise the development of the

- Interpersonal skills of effective listening, negotiating, persuasion and presentation.

- Self reflection and criticality including self awareness, openness and sensitivity to diversity in terms of people, cultures, business and management issues. Also, the skills of learning to learn and developing a continuing appetite for learning; reflective, adaptive and collaborative learning.

6) Medical graduates are expected to be competent in the following areas of communication:

- Listening, to patients, relatives / carers / partners, and other healthcare professionals.

- Explaining, and providing patients and others with adequate information.

- Mediating and negotiating with patients, carers and colleagues.

-

5.4   The impact of personal development planning on skills development

In addition to skills integration within the curriculum and benchmark standards, personal development planning and progress files have had a significant impact on the development of interpersonal skills within the higher education curriculum. Personal development planning is defined by QAA (2000) as "a structured and supported processes to develop the capacity of individuals to reflect upon their own learning and achievement and to plan for their own personal, educational and career development". This emphasis on skills encourages students to identify areas for development and look for opportunities to evidence where they have gained skills e.g. taking part in voluntary work, engaging with student societies, standing as student course reps etc.

 The link between employability and pdp is well documented. At the University of Leeds, Pauline Kneale has used employer's performance and review documentation to show how a process which has been developed during academic study is continued in employment/
http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/courses/other/performance/pdpindex.html (last visited 7/6/07)

Further information and resources about personal development planning and its impact on the higher education curriculum is also available through the LearnHigher website
http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/learningareas/Personal_Development.html (last visited 7/6/07)

6   Teaching and Assessment of Listening & Interpersonal Skills

The following section outlines a selection of examples of good practice in the integration of teaching and assessment of listening and interpersonal skills across a number of health and business related disciplines. Again the purpose of this section is to provide a flavour of teaching and assessment practices within this area rather than a comprehensive review of all the teaching techniques and assessment opportunities that are available. To place this practice in context, the relevance of listening and interpersonal skills to each of the disciplines covered is also considered.

6.1   Medicine

The importance of listening and interpersonal skills within the medical profession is apparent on a number of levels. For example, Lloyd et al (1991, cited in Greco, Spike, Powell and Brownlea, 2002) found that interpersonal skills were the most important criterion used by those selecting a physician. Similarly, Lang, Floyd and Beine (2000) suggested that good listening skills provide increased satisfaction for both patient and physician, and improved medical management. In addition, Silverman, Kurtz and Draper (1998) argued that effective communication skills were essential to a whole host of activities involved in healthcare from initial stages of taking a patient's history to provision of information later in the treatment process. The training of undergraduates often parallels this as they are taught to listen to the patient's 'story' at the beginning of a consultation and from this determine the line of questioning leading to diagnosis (Cocksedge and May, 2005). As well as excellent listening skills, medical practitioners also require exemplary interpersonal skills and a good 'bed-side manner' (Greco et al 2002).

At the University of Leeds the Medical Education Unit assesses medical interview skills using the Calgary-Cambridge model of gathering patient information and building a relationship (see http://www.skillscascade.com/handouts/CalgaryCambridgeGuide.pdf). This model provides an outline of the attributes of an effective interview and covers issues such as building a relationship with the patient and gathering information. Simulated patients are often used to help medical students practise gathering information and taking patient histories. Aspergen's (1999) review of literature relating to communication skills training in medicine suggested that the use of simulated patients was a powerful training tool as students tended to respond to these patients in a similar way that they did to real patients.

6.2   Nursing

The requirement for effective communication is also apparent in the nursing profession. Chant et al (2002) noted the widely held view that patient satisfaction, compliance and recovery can all be enhanced through effective communication with and by nurses. Yet despite this evidence the authors conclude that interpersonal communication skills are still lacking in many areas of nursing practice. Again these researchers suggested that in order to address this problem greater emphasis must continue to be placed on skills training in higher education.

At the University of Leeds, student mental health nurses use video to develop their interpersonal and therapeutic counselling skills. Counselling sessions with simulated patients are conducted using person-centred and psychodynamic therapeutic approaches, with immediate feedback given by the simulated patient, peers and teachers. The video is reviewed and reflected on by the student. Specific skills sessions on self awareness, verbal and non-verbal communication and listening/attending skills are integral to the curriculum.

6.3   Dentistry

The importance of communication skills is also emphasised in the dentistry curriculum. Hannah, Millichamp and Ayers (2004) identified a number of positive outcomes associated with dentists who demonstrate effective communication skills. Amongst others, these benefits included increased patient satisfaction, a reduction in anxiety and better adherence to advice given to them by their dentists.

Interpersonal skills training provided to dentistry students at the University of Leeds also involves the use of simulated patients and video recordings. Patient interview scenarios become increasingly complex over time. At level one, students develop a better understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication and anticipate barriers to effective communication, by level three the focus is on work with more challenging patients and communications within the dental team. Formative assessment occurs by self and peer assessment of videos, feed-back from simulated and actual patients and students keeping reflective logs relating to actual patient encounters.

6.4   Business-related degrees

Listening and interpersonal skills also have an important role in customer focused business environments. A survey by McEwan (1997 cited by Rautalinko and Lisper, 2004) showed that employees spent up to 25% of their total training time on communication skills including listening and reflecting skills training. The study carried out by Rautalinko and Lisper (2004) assessed the effects of reflective listening training in a corporate setting with results demonstrating that training increased reflective listening and that after training these skills were subsequently transferred to an authentic work place setting. Clearly the implication here is that skills training has a positive effect on performance within genuine business environments.

At the University of Portsmouth a generic module on communication skills in the workplace is a named award for a number of degrees including International Trade, Sports Management and Communications Studies (for syllabus details see: http://www.tech.port.ac.uk/tud/db/UnivPort/level_2/ComWork1.htm - last visited 3/4/07). The module places particular emphasis on interpersonal skills in team situations and consists of a variety of teaching methods including workshops, role plays, simulations and lectures. The stated aims of the module are as follows:

1) To sensitise participants to the interpersonal skills needed for effective organisational functioning.

2) To enable participants to acquire the language connected to a range of interpersonal skills so that they may communicate more confidently and more effectively in an organisational context.

6.5   Language study

As language teaching has moved toward comprehension-based approaches, listening to learn has become increasingly important in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom (Van Duzer,1997), and is seen as a core component of many language programmes (Richards, 2005). The central role of listening in this discipline has generated a lot of research into the processes involved in second language listening and comprehension (Field, 1998; 2004). Considerable attention has also been given to the development of techniques and tools to encourage the development of skills in this area (Wilson, 2003; Hulstijn, 2003).

6.6   Summary

The evidence reviewed in this section suggests that sound efforts are being made to integrate both the teaching and assessment of listening and interpersonal skills using a variety of different techniques and across a variety of disciplines. Although there is some evidence available in the literature relating to the effectiveness of these various methods (see above discussion of simulated patients for example), there are calls for a more thorough examination of this issue. Chant et al (2002) recommended that more research be conducted to both evaluate the effectiveness of various skills training methods and to identify which particular elements of the teaching currently available is most useful in terms of improving communication skills in practise.

7   Emerging themes: Implications for listening and interpersonal skills

7.1   Online learning

The facility to learn online is changing the dynamics of interpersonal communication and affecting the way that people teach and learn (DeLacey & Leonard, 2002; Radcliffe, 2002; Starr, 1997 cited by Lee, Cho, Gay, Davidson and Ingraffea, 2003). The online (rather than face to face) learning situation is potentially extremely valuable but also brings with it a host of new challenges for educators.

The idea that social interaction can promote effective learning has been acknowledged by learning theories (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Yang, Tsai, Kim, Cho and Laffey, 2006) and is central to more recent conceptual frameworks (e.g. Wenger 1998 cited in Yang et al, 2006). As the growing pedagogic philosophy for online learning is socio-constructivist in nature with an emphasis on collaboration (Dawson, 2006) its inherently social and interactive nature has implications for skills development. A significant proportion of recent literature within the area of interpersonal communication has concentrated on this issue and findings suggest that successful online collaboration requires a sense of community and productive social interaction with both peers and educators (McInnerney and Roberts, 2004). Computer mediated communication (CMC) through both asynchronous and synchronous communication can minimise isolation and foster online relationships yet the student needs to learn a whole new etiquette (or netiquette) when communicating online.

There is a growing need for information and resources to help students adapt to an online learning environment and develop the interpersonal skills needed to build and maintain secure online communities. Equally educators need help in moving to this learning medium; communicating and supporting students within an online environment involves different skills than communication in a face to face situation.

Technological advancements also have implications for listening and interpersonal skill development beyond the sphere of online learning. An increasing reliance on the use of new technologies in the occupational domain is also changing the nature of communication in the workplace and increasing the role it plays (Stevens, 2005). In order to remain responsive to these changes, it is important that universities provide

students with the training needed to become skilled in the use of emerging technologies. An example from the area of communications is the need to expose students to activities that allow them to become proficient in the use of email in professional settings (Burkill et al, 2000).

7.2   Widening participation

The growing diversity of the student population that has resulted from the government's agenda for widening participation in higher education also has implications for skills training. At a general level, Burkill et al (2000) point out that because students entering higher education now differ much more in terms of their communicative abilities, the assumption that all students will already possess the skills necessary for successful learning at university when they enter is no longer valid. Therefore, the need to focus efforts on listening and interpersonal skills development is more apparent now than ever before.

The cultural diversity of the student population is also increasing, and this too has important implications for listening and interpersonal skills training. Cross-cultural variations in terms of communication are extensive and extend far beyond simple language differences. Variations with regard to the meaning of communicative cues have the potential to create misunderstanding or discomfort. For example, individuals who do not come from "close contact" cultures (see Guirdham, 2002) are likely to experience discomfort in interactive situations where close proximity is required (Hayes, 2002). Argyle (1994) also provides details of cross-cultural differences in a number of other non-verbal behaviours relating to communication including gesturing and gaze.

At a more general level, Guirdham (2002) points out that there are also cross cultural differences in the emphasis placed on expressive relative to receptive communication strategies. Eastern cultures tend to focus on skills linked to receiving signals (e.g. listening) while Western cultures tend to be more sender (e.g. speaking) orientated.

Clearly, in order to accommodate the needs of the increasingly diverse student population it is important that listening and interpersonal skills teaching and assessment take into account variations between students in terms of both their abilities and cultural backgrounds.

8   Summary

This review provides an introduction to various issues relating to the development of listening and interpersonal skills in higher education. It is clear from the literature presented here that effective interpersonal functioning is supported by a number of different, but inter-related skills. The value placed on these skills by employers and the key role that they play in promoting effective learning demonstrates their importance. Although some disciplines have a history of emphasising listening and interpersonal skills, there are also many disciplines in which they have been relatively neglected until recently.

The literature reviewed here suggests that this situation is now changing and a number of different examples of good practise in the development of these skills were described. It is clear that some disciplines are actively developing students' interpersonal communication skills using role-play, video feedback and other interactive activities. However, one limitation of these initiatives is that many of the learning resources supporting the interactions are specialist in nature using, for example, case studies which relate to specific client groups. Despite this, a lot of positive work is being done in the area of listening and interpersonal skills development. Opportunities to encourage self-development are evident in many educational institutions with learning development centres providing resources and training sessions including interpersonal communication. The Skills Centre at the University of Leeds (www.skillscentre.leeds.ac.uk) offers web resources and workshops and these will be supplemented by the work of the LearnHigher CETL.

As a result of this study a dedicated website will be developed to link to a bank of qualified information and activity resources. In addition, where there is a need that cannot be met by existing resources, generic, re-usable learning objects will be developed that can be integrated into individual learning programmes.

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Interview Techniques

In today's environment, professionals must take advantage of every opportunity to reach their target audience with positive messages about their issues and causes. When you are brought into the news media spotlight, your actions and words can have a positive or negative impact. The trick is to do more than "hold your own" with the media. You must seize the moment to communicate your message instead of simply answering questions. If you panic and engage in self-doubt, you can easily lose control of the situation. But if you stop, take a deep breath and remember one fact, you can immediately begin to turn any encounter with the news media to your advantage.

The one fact to remember:

You have more power and control than you think.
Even in a situation that seems uncontrollable, you have control of your actions and words. Information is power and you have the ability to use that power in a positive way as a persuasive communicator. The key to successful communication with the news media lies in understanding how the news media works and using your knowledge to manage interviews wisely.

When you are in the spotlight, keep in mind:

- You are not at the news media's mercy.
- You are a source of information.
- You may not be able to control events entirely, but you can control your responses to them.
- You can also control the way you communicate those responses to the news media and the public.
- You can't control the media, but you can help shape media coverage and, thereby, help shape public perceptions of you, your organization, the program or the issue.

When your organization, or an issue that you are involved with, is the subject of a breaking news story, you must do more than react. You must be in front of events, not dragged along by them. The best way to stay in front is to have a communications plan that is based on a firm understanding of the news media's needs, motivations and methods.

Understanding the Media — News is a Business

A mystique seems to surround the media, but close examination reveals a rather typical management structure behind the smiling anchor team and the hustling reporters. This management team is simply trying to create and maintain a market for a product, sharing the same bottom-line concerns as other businesses. In fact, productivity and profitability are just as fundamental in the news media as in other businesses.

The Reporter

Your interface with the news business is most likely to be a reporter. It is important to understand that a reporter is neither a saint nor a sinner.

A reporter has a job to do and that job is complicated by pressures from management and editors, serious time constraints and a limited knowledge of who you are and what you do. Most reporters are

trying to get information in a straightforward manner. They rarely have sinister motives and are usually not out to destroy you in an interview. They may be aggressive, but that's because you are one of their few sources — maybe their only source — of information.

However, reporters can occasionally be careless and ill-informed. Even a "beat" reporter, who covers a specific topic on a regular basis (such as transportation), may have limited knowledge of your issue. To be a good communicator, you need to look beyond the reporter's limitations in order to establish a rapport. Frustration or resentment on your part could lead to a communication breakdown and perhaps a negative story. By remaining open and cooperative, you may be able to educate the reporter in a non-threatening way.

It's also important to understand the ways in which broadcast journalists differ from print journalists in their news-gathering techniques and philosophies.

Television and Radio

In general, you can expect television and radio reporters to approach a news story with less perspective than their print counterparts. They will also be less willing to get below the surface of the story.

Because the broadcast media must fit into a time-constrained capsule, the context and nuances of a story — often critical to understanding — are sacrificed. It is a good idea, prior to a radio or television interview, to tune into the specific program to get a feel for the style and tone of the show. You might also visit the station's Web site where you can find useful information about the radio show host(s) and their format.

As a rule, radio news is the least probing and most superficial information medium. But it is also one of the most immediate. Radio has the ability to get news to the public rapidly. Radio news interviews should, therefore, be conducted carefully and thoughtfully since radio may well carry your first communication to the outside world. Try to consider the various questions that reporters might ask and prepare a clear and succinct answer to each. Make the most of this opportunity to reemphasize your key messages.

Television news is perhaps the most persuasive and influential information medium in the world today. In the U.S., television news has changed the way we think, the way we vote and the way we're governed. As its impact continues to grow, television news continues to change. Television technology brings ever-greater access to events around the world and sometimes becomes part of the event itself. And yet, despite its power, television news is limited in many ways. A good communicator, however, will tailor information to make effective use of this medium.

Because television is a visual medium, news assignment editors may ask, "Who's got the pictures?" more often than "What's the story?" Unfortunately, the pictures are the story to some television news people even if those pictures don't really explain what is going on, and more importantly, WHY it's going on.

Another concept that guides much television news coverage is the "sound bite" — a few seconds of an answer or comment pulled from an interview. This "sound bite" is often presented as the essential

kernel of information around which the story revolves. It may or may not accurately reflect the substance or context of the situation being covered.

On a continuing story, one that is covered for more than a day or two, television news managers often try to find a new angle or "spin" for each day's coverage. Sometimes the angle is more an invention for the sake of diversity or drama than it is a facet of the story that is useful or enlightening.

Finally, television news operations tend to feed off one another. The danger in this kind of imitative behavior, of course, is that a false premise or story may be repeated and perpetuated by others.

So does television news have any redeeming qualities? The answer is an emphatic "YES!" There are heroic reporters and news crews who have made important contributions in the coverage of breaking news and special events. They sometimes show us amazing depth in a medium defined by speed — whether covering a riot, assassination or an earthquake.

Broadcast Interview Techniques

Being well prepared before facing the camera or microphone will go a long way in helping to ensure a successful interview. How you handle yourself will have a remarkable effect on the impact of the story. Keep the following tips in mind before your next interview.

In any interview situation — but especially in a television interview — where you sit in relation to others can have an effect on how you come across to the audience.

- Never sit between two interviewers. Sitting in the middle puts you at a disadvantage, because you must constantly turn your head from one side to the other to answer questions. Sit to one side of two interviewers, especially if they are apt to be hostile.
- When you sit down, be sure your jacket is pulled straight and that you are sitting straight in the chair.
- Do not lean to one side or the other or slouch as if folded in the middle.
- Do not glance at the camera while you are responding to an interviewer's question. The camera should be ignored unless you are told otherwise. Make eye contact with the reporter.
- Avoid sudden body movements (standing up, leaning back in the chair) that may take you out of the camera range.
- Remember to keep your answers short and succinct. Avoid technical language and too many statistics. Instead try using anecdotes to convey your message.
- Discuss the interview with the reporter before your interview begins. Find out what the reporter wants to learn. Ask about questions in advance.

Print Media

Newspapers and magazines can, and quite often do, bring us more ideas, perspective and history than broadcast media. Unfortunately, not all publications live up to their potential for deepening our understanding of events.

When you encounter a print reporter, you will generally find that he or she is more prepared for an interview than their broadcast counterparts. That means questioning will be more comprehensive and probing. Print media reporters are more likely to be specialists in a certain area (beat) and thus better informed about your subject. They tend to work longer on a story and produce fewer stories each day/week than broadcast reporters. Their stories usually go into greater depth. Many reporters will also use statistical data if provided.

You don't have to think in "sound bites" with print reporters, but you do have to keep an interview focused and directed at all times. Even though a newspaper or magazine writer may start out with a greater understanding of the situation being covered, watch out, a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing. With more time to develop background for a story, a reporter may also develop a questionable angle or premise. Watch for a reporter's hidden agenda, predilection or preconceived notions about your organization, program or issue.

Once you have some understanding of the needs, motivations and techniques of the news media, you will be better prepared for handling an interview.

Print Interview Techniques

The following are additional points to consider in preparing for a print interview:

- Know who is interviewing you and why. Find out the reporter's correct name, purpose of the story, the publication and when it is distributed, etc. Most reporters will give you the general line of questioning in advance, if requested.
- Anticipate questions and prepare for them.
- Work out responses. Crisp, punchy, straightforward answers are best. Do not memorize the answer, except for key phrases. Remember the two or three key points you want to make and make them.
- Practice responses with an associate before the interview.
- Avoid "no comment." If you can't answer a question, say so and why. If you don't know an answer, it is okay to say so. Simply offer to follow-up with the information requested. Find out when the reporter's deadline is and make every effort to accommodate it.
- Don't answer hypothetical questions (What if...). Do say: "I don't want to speculate..." but then bridge that comment with a remark such as "...but I can say that we're prepared to..."
- Do listen carefully to questions.
- Do not debate or spar with a reporter, but politely correct wrong facts or assumptions.
- Cite third-party experts or statistics that support your view.
- Do not repeat inaccuracies or deny allegations. Instead, state your position clearly and concisely. (You may be quoted out of context: "I'm not a crook.")
- Remember, "off-the-record" statements sometimes do get published.
- Don't lie to the media.

Handling the Interview — The Request

Try to determine what the reporter wants to accomplish in the interview. Why are they doing the interview? What is the story about? If it is not obvious to you, ask.

Why do you want to talk to me?

You may discover the reporter is after information that is really outside your area of expertise or that someone else is a more appropriate spokesperson.

What do you want to talk about?

Discovering the subject areas they want to explore will help you prepare for the actual interview.

Who is the reporter?

You may know the reporter is informed about your area of expertise or you may need to educate the reporter about your organization or issue.

What documents have you seen? What is your deadline?

Being responsive in helping a reporter meet his/her deadline will go a long way in developing a positive working relationship.

Attitude

Be polite, open, and above all, honest. But remember, do not let a reporter lead you or badger you. You can successfully counter a reporter's attempts at intimidation and maintain control of the interview. Just bridge to your talking points.

Talking Points

Organize your thoughts into concise messages. These talking points will anchor all your answers throughout the interview. Try to consider the various questions that reporters might ask you and prepare a clear, complete answer to each. Make the most of this opportunity to reemphasize your key messages. Think of three or four recurring themes that you would want the public to hear. These are your talking points and they answer the question: "What, at the very least, do I want the audience to remember?"

Keep messages simple. Take initiative, control the interview and don't wait for good questions.

Your Answers

If you've done your part, you'll have an idea of what the reporter wants to learn. A concise answer to a reporter's questions can keep you in control of the interview. Think in terms of three-part answers: statement, explanation and conclusion.

Intimidation Tactics

Learn to recognize the intimidation techniques a reporter might employ. They include:

Question Type	Definitions/Objectives
Loaded Preface	A long preamble to a question, usually containing false and/or loaded statements.
False Premise	An attempt to lure you into taking an extreme position.
Quotation	A "fishing trip" by the reporter who is trying to get a colorful statement out of you by referencing a third party.
Hypothetical Situation	The reporter tries to get you to react on an emotional level, perhaps to establish an inconsistency.
Divide & Conquer	The reporter tries to drive a wedge between you and someone with whom you should be carefully aligned.
Negative Entrapment	A line of questioning that tries to uncover something negative.
Paraphrasing	The reporter draws his own conclusion and tries to get you to agree with it.

Mental Preparation

An interview should be a positive experience, if you do your homework. You don't want to seem defensive. Reporters will pick up on defensiveness very quickly, as will the camera. Take the media interview for what it is — a rare opportunity to tell the reporter's audience about what you are doing and why it is important. Anticipate tough questions.

Bridging

Should a reporter use intimidating questioning techniques, you do not have to stop talking. You can "bridge" from the reporter's inappropriate question to your own talking point. It's okay to say:

"On the contrary…"
"Our position is…"
"My vision is…"
"That's one point of view, let me give you another"
"The other side of that issue is…"
"Our view is…"
"Yes, and…"

Interview Tips
- Never speak "off the record."
- Stick to the facts.
- Do not speculate or guess.
- Do not offer personal opinions.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, it's okay to say "I don't know" but promise to get the answer before the reporter's deadline.
- Speak from the perspective of the viewer/listener/reader.
- Tell the truth.

- Be a helpful resource.
- You don't have to talk about things you don't want to (or can't) talk about.
- Have your own message. Each interview presents an opportunity to say something positive. Bridge to your messages at every opportunity.
- Use simple and clear "sound bites," especially for broadcast media.
- Be prepared for the interview/reporter. Remember that you may not be given exact questions in advance.
- In television interviews, your gestures and facial expressions may say more than words.
- In radio interviews, speak clearly and distinctly, enunciate carefully.
- During a crisis, deliver the facts and your message early on. Clarify misinformation and inaccuracies immediately. Be accessible to the news media to avoid gossip, speculation or criticizing.
- Don't ask to read or preview a story before it is printed. Quotes will be checked, but you don't have the right to preview the story in its entirety.

Overcoming Nervousness

It's natural to be nervous before going before the camera. Every professional entertainer experiences some kind of "butterfly" feelings before a performance.
What can you do about it?

- Practice a few relaxing exercises before you go on — rolling your neck, swinging your arms, stretching.
- Take a deep breath, hold it for 3-5 seconds, let it out slowly.
- Stand naturally with you feet shoulder-width apart, your hands loose and relaxed. Then shake your hands and arms, letting the vibration work itself into the rest of your body.
- Think of nervousness as a way of ensuring you are "up" for the interview.
- The best way to combat nervousness before the camera is to come prepared for the situation by knowing your subject matter and the major points you need to make.
- Many times, the talk show host or reporter will spend a few moments before the program begins talking with you about the subjects to be covered. This also provides an opportunity to "calm down."
- Regarding relaxing, whether the camera is running or not, when you're in the television studio or near a camera, you are "on." <u>Do not make comments in the green room (room used as a waiting area prior to an interview), during commercial breaks or after the program that you would not make on the air</u>.
- One final thing to remember. Reporters would rather talk to someone like yourself, who knows the industry and the issue, than the most polished looking TV spokesperson.

Personal Appearance

What a speaker looks like should never overshadow what he or she has to say. A speaker's appearance, however, can help make the message more convincing. Keep these points in mind as you prepare for a public appearance:

- Dress conservatively. If you wear a uniform to work, wear one to the interview.
- Wear a dark suit with a solid color shirt or blouse. Avoid white, which tends to reflect light onto the face of the person who is wearing it. Solids show up better than patterns.

- Do not wear flashy jewelry.
- Keep jacket or dress free of lapel buttons or pins.
- There should be no bulky items in pockets.
- For major television appearances, use powder, professionally applied. A dusting of powder on your face will help avoid shine invariably caused by bright lights. It will also fix any tendency men have toward a "five o'clock shadow."
- Do not wear sunglasses.
- When seated, keep jacket buttoned, but pulled straight to avoid wrinkles.
- Make sure collar and tie are straight, shirt tucked in.
- Never wear a hat.

A few final tips:

- Reporters generally feel overworked, underpaid and on deadlines. Know this. Respect this.
- Become a resource to the media. Comment on trends and issues as they relate to your region. Localize stories. Provide attributable documentation to your claims.
- Know the media format you're pitching to. Become familiar with the reporter's style and history in covering your issues.
- Return reporter's calls. Respond in a timely manner. Accommodate deadlines.
- If you can't comment on an issue or event, refer to someone who can (or else give an explanation as to why you can't comment).
- Include ethnic media when you tell your story (see Section VII, "Working with Ethnic Media"):
  - Provide bilingual spokespersons.
  - Identify relevance of information to specific ethnic communities.

Effective Interviewing Skills

The Key to Maximizing Your Job Interview

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Workshop Outcomes

Knowledge of:

- Types of interviews
- Interview preparation steps and tips
- Stages of an interview
- Common and illegal questions
- Developing effective answers

Types of Interviews

- Structured / non-structured

- One-on-one / panel / group

- Responsive / reactive (stress interview)

- Phone (pre-screening)

- Informational

- Traditional / Behavioural

What is a Behaviour Based Interview?

- A structured interviewing style based on questions designed to probe past behaviour in specific situations
- Focuses on experience, behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities related to the position
- Used to get an idea of how an individual will manage duties based on their past behaviour

Note: Past behavior is the best predictor of future performance

Behavioural Interview

Traditional Interview

Behavioural questions are more probing and more specific than traditional interview questions

Behavioural: "Tell me about your greatest achievement?

Behavioural: "What did you do when...?"

Traditional interview questions are more hypothetical rather than focusing on past events.

Traditional: "Tell me about yourself?"

Traditional: "What would you do if...?"

Examples of Behavioural Questions

If the job posting states the company is looking for a "team player", possible interview questions could include:

- Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a co-worker's working style in order to successfully complete a project.

- Describe a situation when working with others produced better results than if you had completed the project on your own.

- Can you share with me a time when demonstrated your ability to work as an effective team member?

Interview Workshop - Activity

Please get into three groups; each group will receive a flip chart paper and marker

- ## Group One: Pre-interview

  What to do before the interview; up to the time you reach the front door

- ## Group Two: Interview

  What to do during the interview; from the moment you walk into the building to the end of the actual interview

- ## Group Three: Post-interview

  What to do after the interview; from the moment you walk out of the interview room and onwards

Pre-interview Preparation

- Documents

- Professional Attire

- Prepare Route

- Prepare answers to possible questions

Documents

- Copy of resume for _each_ interviewer +1
- Pen & paper
- Interview Agenda - <u>your</u> questions – remember it's a two way street to see if you fit into their organization AND if <u>you</u> feel comfortable there)
- Copy of job posting
- References
- Portfolio (optional depending on career)

Professional Attire

A day or two _before_ the interview:

- Try on your intended outfit (fit)
- Check for stains, rips, missing button, creases, etc.
- Coordinate accessories (tie, belt, socks, shoes, jewelry, etc.)
- Set aside in a "safe" spot
- Dress one step above

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Prepare Your Route

- Confirm address, including suite number, and interviewer's name(s)

- Print a map of the route / write directions

- Trial run (*before* day of interview)

- Check for construction signs

- Locate available parking lot options

- Set aside change/credit card (if needed)

Prepare Your Answers

- Use *recent* examples where you excelled

- Identify your skills throughout your response

- Use industry terms (acronyms or industry slang)

- Avoid casual language

- Be objective, not subjective…just the facts

- Include amounts, dollars, time frames, percentages, numbers, etc.

- Length: 1-3 minutes

- Practice, practice, practice!

Ten Common Questions to Expect

- Tell me about yourself.
- What is your greatest achievement?
- Tell me about a time you save time or money.
- What is your greatest strength?
- Can you me about your computer skills?
- Tell me about a time where you had to handle a challenging co-worker or customer.
- Can you describe a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty?
- What do you believe is your professional weakness?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- Why do you want to work for this company?

Use the STAR technique

- Describe the **S**ituation

- Discuss the **T**ask that needed to be accomplished

- What **A**ctions did you take to perform your task

- What were the **R**esults of your actions

Preparation Tips

- Be prepared to discuss negative experiences (choosing those that turned out well or you made the best of the situation and what you learned from it)

- There are no right or wrong answers - just give enough details to allow the interviewer to accurately assess your past accomplishments

- Keep a record of your achievements, use them to come up with great STAR examples for the next time you go for an interview

Five Stages of an Interview

1. Opening - rapport building
2. Questions about your experience and skills
3. Exploring professional style (fit)
4. Interviewee questions
5. Closing - final message

Tips for Your Arrival

- Be "on" *before* entering the building

- Arrive 15 minutes before appointment

- Pleasantly greet receptionist and identify yourself

- While waiting, review your answers

- Avoid fidgeting, chewing gum, talking on cell phone or texting

First Impressions

- Studies show that an interviewer forms judgments within *four minutes* of meeting you

- Much of the impact you create in an interview is based on your visual and non-verbal presentation

Your First Impression

- Greet the interviewer with a comfortably firm handshake, eager smile and direct eye contact

- Allow interviewer to indicate where to sit

- Have documents in order, and offer copy of resume to each interviewer

- Assume a receptive posture

- Breathe and try to relax…remember:
  you are prepared!

What You Say and How You Say It

- Preparing your answers is a great start!

- Being aware of how you are presenting your answers is also important

- Verbal and non-verbal (body language) communication is important too

What You Say:

It's not just what you say, but how you present it and yourself!

93% of information taken in by the interviewer stems from non-verbal communication (facial expression, posture, gestures, etc.)

How you say it (tone) = 38%

What you say = 7%

Appearance, body language, composure = 55%

Source: http://actionsays.blogspot.com/
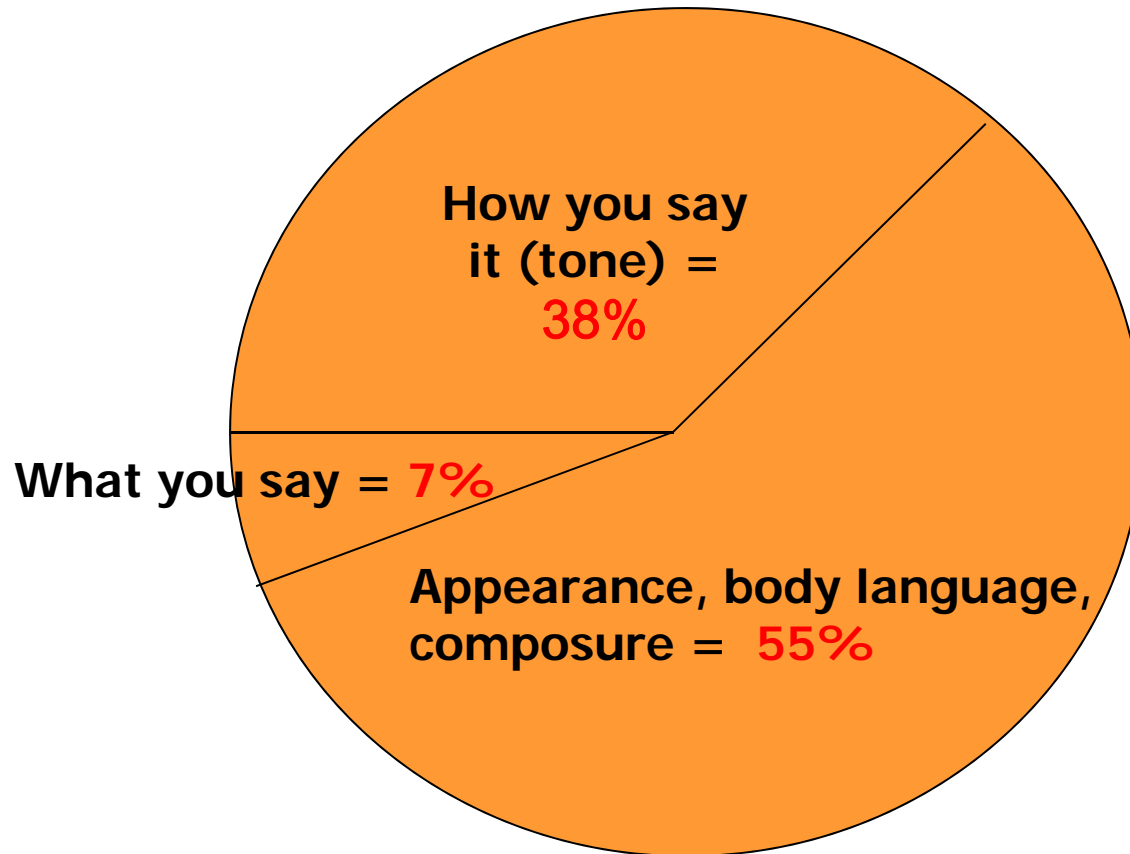
Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is composed of appearance, posture and body language.

Appearance:
- Personal hygiene and clothing

Posture:
- Attentive listening position
- Avoid slouching or sitting on edge
- Make comfortable (slight) adjustments
- Avoid crossing your legs
- Allow for a personal space of about 36 inches

Body Language

- Your words will explain your background, but at the same time, your body language will give out a lot more information

- Becoming more aware of your own body language can increase your chances of getting the job

- Reading the interviewer's body language can be a useful tool to gauge your presentation

Body Language

Body language includes:

- Hands
- Handshake
- Eye contact
- Facial signals and head movements

Your Hands

- Hand movements can liven up an interview, but should be used in moderation, and below eye level

- Avoid crossing your arms

- Avoid unconscious hand movements (biting nails, picking at nails, adjusting tie, wringing hands, rubbing the back of your neck, hands in pockets, clicking a pen, etc.)

The Handshake

- Comfortably firm; 2 - 3 shakes

- Use only 1 hand and put it all the way into the interviewer's hand, with palm up

- Be aware of possible perspiration

- If you don't feel comfortable shaking hands for cultural/religious reasons, you can 'gesture' a greeting

Your Eyes

Eye contact is essential and an excellent way of conveying your interest in the job

- By looking directly at the interviewer you are giving them a sign of trust
- Allow for eye movement to avoid staring
- Avoid looking away, down, or over your glasses when answering questions
- Panel interview: focus on the person who posed the questions, and 'sweep' the others

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Your Facial Signals

- Present a warm and natural smile

- Nod your head slowly in agreeance

- Avoid head bobbing

- Avoid biting / licking your lips

- Be aware if you are rubbing your nose

- Be aware of subconscious facial expressions

Interviewer's Body Language

- Watch the amount of hand gestures the interviewer uses to gauge your usage

- This can serve as warning sign of displeasure (shaking their head, sighing, crossing their arms, etc.)

Understanding the Interviewer

An interviewer must make hiring decisions. To do this THREE basic issues must be covered in the questions they ask:

1. **Can you actually do the job?** Is your experience, training, education, aptitude and interest sufficient so you would be productive for me?

2. **Who are you?** What are you like? What characteristics and traits do you possess?

3. **Will you fit in with the others in my company/organization?** Will you be part of a problem or part of a solution?

Illegal Questions

- Race / Colour / Ancestry / Place of origin
- Age
- Political beliefs
- Religion
- Marital status (children / pregnancy)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Unrelated convictions
- Addictions

(Source: Employment Standards Act
http:www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/00e41_e.htm)

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Handling Illegal Questions

- If you are asked an illegal question it is important not only to know your rights, but also to be able to respond to the question directly and with confidence

- If this is an employer you want to work for, indicate a willingness to demonstrate your suitability for the job without compromising your rights

- Respond with a counter question:

  - "Could you tell me how my (age, marital status, place of birth, etc.) might have any bearing on the job I am applying for?"

  - "That's a very interesting question. I'd be happy to answer it if you could tell me the reason for asking it?"

Closing the Interview

- Provide a copy of your References

- Confirm the follow-up timeframe and phone number

- Restate your interest in the position and why you feel you are the ideal candidate

- Thank the interviewer(s) for their time

- Shake the interviewer's hand

- Remember to SMILE!

Practice Your Interview Skills

- Pick five questions from the list of possible interview questions
- Choose a partner and determine who will be the interviewer and who will be the interviewee first.
- As the interviewee, decide what you would like feedback on. Be specific (body language, using the STAR correctly, nervous gestures, etc)
- After the practice interview. The interviewer will provide feedback ONLY on what the interviewee requested
- Switch places

Post-Interview

- Reflect on interview – note unexpected questions, or answers that need polishing

- Send a Thank You email / card (within 24 hours)

- Follow up (clarify during interview)

- Prepare for a second interview

- Continue your job search

Stay positive!
The right opportunity is waiting for you!

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Group Discussion

Are there any interview questions that you have experienced, concerns with, or would like further assistance with answering?

Are there any other questions relating to the interview process that you may have?

Thank you!

Remember:
Stay Positive!

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INTERVIEWING SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

Goals of an Interview

- **Goal of the Interviewer** - It is also important to consider whom you are talking to. The human resources person is the one likely to know about job descriptions, qualities being sought and the morale or company culture. The hiring manager, your future boss, is the person to ask about the department, the team you will be working with and the job's challenges.
- **Goal of the Interviewee** - Be prepared to talk about your successes and experiences. The employer will want to find out about your past experience -- successes and failures, your work ethic, your track record

Types of Interviews

- **First /Screen** - The first round of interviews is about discovery, learning about the job and the company, not the benefits or raises.
- **Second** – In this round the candidate is usually exposed to more people and details of the company and the position. This also gives the company an opportunity to explore in depth the skills, experience and cultural fit of the candidate.
- **Phone** - In many ways, the way you prepare for a phone interview isn't all that different from the way you'd get ready for a face-to-face interview -- save for a few slight additions to and modifications of your list of preparation tasks.
- **Behavioral**
  - When asked a traditional question like, "What would you do if you had a customer who wasn't interested in buying the product?" you can make up a story. But when you are asked behavioral questions, the interviewer is listening for specific examples of how you have handled situations or problems in the past.
  - Behavioral questions begin with phrases like, "tell me about a time when," or "can you give me an example of." The interviewer wants to hear your real-life examples. Your success stories should include the situation, the action you took and the result.
- **Individual** – A one on one situation with the style varying from interviewer to interviewer.
- **Group/Panel** - Board or panel interviews are usually rather formal and organized, using a standard set of questions for all applicants.

Preparation - Preparation builds confidence.

- **Research**
  - **Job Description** - Look at the job description and compare the company's needs with your experience and qualities.
  - **History of Company** – Search company Web sites for mission statements, product and service information, principals' backgrounds and contact information. Check company financials through the US Securities and Exchange Commission.
  - **Work history/relevant experience** - Review what you did at previous jobs or in an educational environment so you can tie it in to what you can bring to the new company.
- **Preparing Answers**
  - **Rehearse your answers.** Write them down as a script and recite them in front of a mirror. Have backup answers, too. You'll come across as being more confident.

- **Preparing Questions** - The questions you ask, and how you ask them, do as much to differentiate you from the competition as the questions asked by the interviewer.
- **Practice** - The best thing you can do is practice, practice and practice some more. The only one who knows you and can sell you is you. Your goal should be to effectively display the following qualities: capability, confidence, dependability, enthusiasm, flexibility, resourcefulness and strong work ethic.

Be sure to look at typical interview questions, as well as good questions to ask and what not to ask.

Attitude/Behavior

- **Be positive**
  - If you have the attitude of wanting to do your very best for the company, of being focused on the company's needs, of putting yourself forth as the person who will be committed and dedicated to fulfilling their needs, you will likely be the one chosen.
- **Listen**
  - Listening tells the interviewer you have heard what was said -- and sometimes what was not said. The best questions you can ask come from listening.

Closing the Interview

- If you are truly interested in the job, at the end of the interview be sure to:
  - Recap why you feel you are the best candidate for the job
    - (give two or three of your strongest attributes and/or qualifications)
  - Restate your interest in the position by asking for the job.

Successful Public Speaking

Arina Nikitina

Arina Nikitina

Successful Public Speaking

Successful Public Speaking

Contents

Preface

Does the opportunity of delivering a speech in front of a large audience sound just as appealing as a visit to the dentist?

Or do you feel pretty comfortable when talking in public but you are still looking for ways to improve your skills and get even better at motivating, engaging, persuading, presenting, and educating other people?

In each case, you will benefit from reading "Successful Public Speaking".

In this book you will find out how to:

- connect with your audience
- dramatically improve your speaking presence
- overcome public speaking anxiety
- respond appropriately to your audience's needs
- hone your non-verbal communication skills
- add a visual dimension to your presentation
- capture your listeners' attention and interest
- create a killer business presentation step-by-step
- avoid common, yet costly public speaking mistakes

Arina Nikitina is a self-help expert, psychologist, blogger, speaker and a founder of www.goal-setting-guide.com – one of the largest self-improvement portals that covers a wide range of topics such as: goal setting, motivation, communication, leadership, productivity and success.

In 2010 she started her personal blog www.arinanikitina.com, which has become one of the top three self-help blogs.

She is also an author of the best-selling e-book "*Real Goal Getting*".

Download a FREE Report "21 Ways to Boost Self-Confidence":

Please visit www.arinanikitina.com/free-gift to download your self-confidence report and learn more about such topics as communication, intrinsic motivation, goal setting and success.

About the Author

Russian born personal coach and goal setting expert Arina Nikitina has been helping people to achieve thier goals since 2002.

She has used her proven 7-Step Goal Setting System to help entrepreneurs and business professionals all over the country create success on their own terms.

Arina's passion and success as a compelling and passionate professional coach and speaker comes from helping people find the courage and confidence to create their own definition of success and to live it with conviction, joy, and prosperity.

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1   Introduction

1.1   Public Speaking in the Business World

"Nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively." – Gerald R. Ford

Communications in its multiple forms pervades today's business environment. With numerous job interviews, conference calls, meetings, product presentations, workshops, and public events, more and more leaders realize the importance of developing good interpersonal communication skills within their company. Yet the majority of executives and employees continue to neglect and overlook the use of public speaking, leaving the advancements and better career opportunities for those who take proactive steps to master the art of speaking in public.

The truth is that you might have the best products or services, years of experience or an outstanding business idea, but if you do not communicate this to your target audiences, you are limiting your effectiveness. All too often, the very best and inspiring stories in organizations and companies go untold because of people's reluctance to or fear of taking the stage.

Whether your goal is to enhance your professional growth, take your business to the next level, or inspire, persuade and motivate other people to follow your lead, you will have to learn how to convey your ideas in front of a group of people in a clear, structured and captivating manner.

However, becoming an effective public speaker does not have to turn into one of the necessary, yet unpleasant goals on your professional advancement list.

The art of public speaking holds many practical benefits that go far beyond delivering a project presentation or holding a successful meeting.

Developing your communication skills and learning to speak in public:

- Opens up new opportunities for career advancement
- Positions you as an authority
- Sets you apart from your competition
- Attracts the right customers to your business
- Presents technical or business information effectively
- Produces a faster sales cycle
- Allows you to effectively market your business or promote your products to larger audiences
- Improves internal communication
- Helps you to easily assume leadership and train others
- Increases employees' productivity
- Prepares you for spontaneous speaking challenges (e.g. delivering a speech at short notice)
- Establishes greater credibility and helps your clients' loyalty

- Motivates and persuades other people to reach and attain professional goals
- Makes you a desirable guest on local, regional and national conferences, seminars and public speaking events

1.2   Personal and Social Benefits of Public Speaking

A series of psychological studies conducted at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, show that it takes people on average three to five seconds to form an impression about someone they meet for the first time.

> How well people perceive you and the conclusions that they make about your professionalism and character will be largely influenced by your confidence, when presenting yourself.

Improving your ability to speak in front of others and learning to talk about who you are and what you do with natural grace and authenticity can go a long way in expanding your social circle, building strong relationships with successful, like-minded people and making new friends.

Other personal benefits of public speaking include:

- Increased self-confidence
- Improved communication skills
- Increased organizational skills
- Greater social influence
- Enhanced ability to listen
- Greater possibility of meeting new people
- Lesser anxiety and fear when speaking in front of others
- Improved memory
- Enhanced persuasion ability
- Greater control over emotions and body language

2   Evolution of Public Speaking

2.1   What is public speaking?

Public speaking is a process, an act and an art of making a speech before an audience. Absolutely everyone from the age of 10 to 90 has found themselves in situations where they have had to speak publically. However, telling an anecdote at a corporate party, introducing yourself in class or delivering a paper at a conference does not necessarily make you a public speaker.

It is not enough to talk in front of a group of people to be a brilliant public speaker. Your goal should not be limited with informing your audience or expressing your thoughts publically, but to changing emotions, actions, and attitudes, and to leaving your listeners moved by the words and touched by their meaning.

"How to do it?" – has been a question many brilliant speakers have asked themselves.

Many tips, techniques and rules have been elaborated on to find the best way to influence, motivate, entertain and persuade people. Some of these rules go back thousands of years, yet they have not lost their actuality and have been widely used by such world-known speakers as Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama, Jim Rohn and Anthony Robbins.

But what are the main components and 'golden rules' of a great speech?

How have they changed throughout history?

2.2   Three Parts of Persuasion by Aristotle.

The art of speaking in public is not new. Its long tradition can be traced back to Classical Greece (approximately 490-322 BC). Any young men leaving at that time were expected to acquire and develop public speaking skills as part of their duties as citizens.

The first rules of a public speech were elaborated on over 2000 years ago by the Greek philosopher and teacher of Alexander the Great – Aristotle.

We know them as the **Three Basic Parts of Persuasion**:

- Ethos (credibility or the speaker)
- Logos (logic behind any conclusions drawn by a speaker)
- Pathos (emotional appeal or ability to create connection between the speaker and his audience)
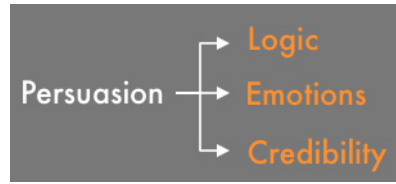
These key elements still lie at the base of any successful public speech.

First, in order to be asked to share their thoughts, observations and ideas publically a speaker should possess a certain level of authority and knowledge about the chosen topic (**ethos**).

To make sure that the message is received and understood correctly by the audience, it has to be conveyed in a clear, informative and logical manner (**logos**).

And to capture and hold the audience's attention the speaker must first establish an emotional connection with the listeners. (**pathos**).

2.3   Cicero's Five Canons of Rhetoric

After the ascension of Rome, public speaking techniques developed in Greece were copied and modified by the Romans. Here, oratory lost its dominance in the political arena, but gained wide popularity as a form of entertainment, allowing famous orators to gain political power and wealth by using their public speaking skills. Amongst such people was Marcus Tullis Cicero – a lawyer, politician, philosopher, who gained fame as Rome's greatest orator. Around 50 B.C. Cicero wrote his treatise called "De Oratore" where he explained his "Five Canons of Rhetoric" that are widely used by many public speakers up to this day.

Cicero believed that the process of eloquent speech preparation consists of five main steps:

- **Invention** - development and refinement of the argument (finding ways to persuade)
- **Arrangement** - creation of the structure of a coherent argument
- **Style** - the process of determining how to present an argument, using rhetorical techniques and choosing the words that have the greatest impact on the audience
- **Memory** - the process of learning and memorizing the speech while making it sound natural
- **Delivery** - the process of making effective use of voice and body language

2.4   Modern Elements of Public Speaking

The widespread accessibility of mass media and especially, the Internet, has made it easy for us to reach a vast audience and let our voice be heard.

Public speaking has evolved from a skill reserved by a selected few to one of the most powerful marketing, educational and brand promotion tools in any business.

It is safe to say that in the modern business world just about every well-paid position requires some form of public speaking, be it giving a group sales presentation, presenting your ideas to the board of directors, speaking to a committee or telling a group of potential clients about your company during a corporate event.

Most public speeches can be broken down into five basic elements, usually expressed as

"Who is saying What to Whom using what Medium with what Effects?"
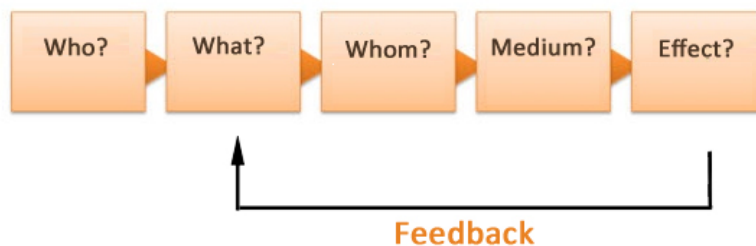
2.5   Three Styles of Speech

The three most common styles of speeches that you encounter in today's business and social world are - impromptu, manuscript and extemporaneous. To become a great public speaker you will have to learn and ace each one of them, as it will allow you to speak confidently and effectively in front of any number of listeners and in any given situation.

Impromptu speech

Impromptu speech is prompted by the occasion rather than being planned in advance. While famous public speakers often joke that best impromptu speeches should be prepared weeks in advance, usually in real life we have very little or no time to prepare before we speak in front of the audience. Some examples of impromptu speech could be your boss asking you to bring the rest of your team up to date, or a group of friends urging you to say a few words at a non-profit event.

Manuscript speech

This type of speech is written like a manuscript and is meant to be delivered word for word. Manuscript speeches are used on many political and social occasions, when every word carries a lot of weight and should not be misquoted. One of the most common examples of a manuscript speech is a political figure delivering a speech that has been written by another person.

Extemporaneous speech

Extemporaneous speech is the most commonly used type of speech that helps to establish emotional connection with the audience. It is built around key points, but the material can be presented freely, allowing the speaker to make changes in their speech based on the listeners' reaction.

Later in this book we will cover the preparation of all three speech styles, but before we do that, let us address one of the major obstacles that most people face when it comes to speaking in front of a group of people – Fear.

3 Overcoming Fear of Public Speaking

3.1 Introduction

An opportunity to speak in front of an audience, whether it is three or three hundred people, is the chance to sell your business or service to potential customers or clients. However, one of the biggest obstacles that many business men and women face is the fear of public speaking.
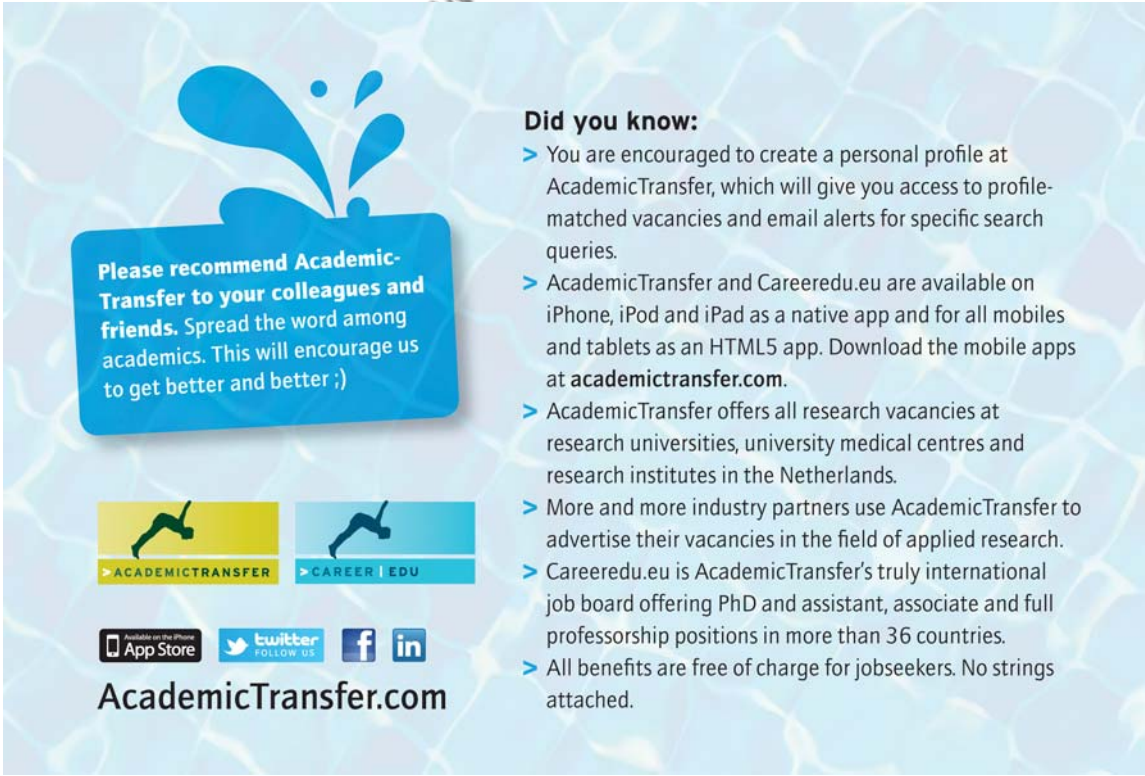
According to national surveys and research results, fear of public speaking (or 'glossophobia') ranks among the top dreads, surpassing the fear of heights, fear of spiders and even fear of death itself. As Jerry Seinfeld put it – "*at a funeral, the average person would rather be in the casket than giving the eulogy.*"

So what is it that makes the fear of public speaking so strong and so debilitating?

Why does 75% of population suffer from speech anxiety every time they are asked to talk in front of other people?

How can we overcome the fear of speaking in public and polish our communication skills?

What can we do to transform the fear of public speaking into enthusiasm and positive energy?

3.2   The Hidden Psychology behind the Fear of Public Speaking

Psychologists know that the very fact of being in the spotlight often triggers the whole range of physical reactions that we would experience in the face of real life-threatening danger as:

- Pounding heart
- Dry mouth
- Shaky hands
- Quivering voice
- Cold sweaty palms
- Stomach cramps

Recent research conducted at UCLA (University of California at Los Angeles) might finally shed some light on this issue. MRI scans of the brain showed that the shock and distress of rejection activate the same part of the brain, called the anterior cingulate cortex, that also responds to physical pain.

Another study conducted by Edward E. Smith, director of cognitive neuroscience at Columbia University demonstrated that the feeling of rejection is one of the most painful emotions that can be sustained even longer than fear.

How can these findings explain the fear of public speaking?

If it is painful enough to be rejected by just one person, imagine the pain we could experience when being rejected by a large group of people. Of course, our emotions range from being absolutely terrified to feeling very uncomfortable!

Our anxiety and fright before the speech, however, may be caused not by fear of public speaking per se' but by the audience's reaction to our performance. Or put simply, we are afraid that our nervousness will interfere with our ability to perform and we will end up embarrassing ourselves.

Accepting our fear helps us to take proactive steps in addressing stage fright and letting the adrenaline rush work for you, not against you.

3.3   Two Biggest Myths about the Fear of Public Speaking

When it comes to public speaking there are two common misconceptions that many business owners and leaders fall prey to:

Myth #1:

Great public speaking skills are an inborn talent. Of course, some people find it easier to speak in public than the other, but the majority of successful speakers have trained themselves to perform through persistence, preparation and practice. The bottom line is that if you can speak in front of two friends, you can deliver a presentation before an audience.

Myth #2:

Fear of public speaking is negative and undesirable. This is another common misconception that holds many new speakers back. They believe that stage fright is a sign of their inadequacy and lack of public speaking skills. This could not be further away from truth.

No one escapes the rush of adrenaline that accompanies a presentation in front of an audience. The difference between successful speakers and 'rookies', is that they have learned to transform and use fear to their advantage.

Fear is not only a normal reaction to a public speaking event, but actually boosts our performance. Psychologists agree that some amount of fear heightens your awareness, improves your concentration, sharpens your thinking and gives you an energy boost. It is fear that allows most speakers to perform better during the actual presentation than during practice.

3.4. 5   Ways to Transform the Public Speaking Fear into Excitement

The fear of public speaking should not turn into an obstacle to your professional and personal growth. It is much easier to build a business or to advance in your career when you are able to speak with confidence and authenticity to any size group.

If you are worried that fear may worsen instead of improve your presentation, here are 5 Practical Ways to transform it into unshakable confidence and excitement:

Deep breathing

Such strong emotions as anxiety and fear trigger in your body very specific "fight or flight" response: your muscles tighten, your heart rate increases, your blood pressure goes up and your breathing becomes shallow. While this physical reaction may be helpful in escaping danger it is hardly helpful during the presentation (as you can neither run away from your audience, nor fight with it). However, since your breathing rate is directly connected to your emotional reaction, the fastest and easiest way to take your emotions under control and regain confidence is through deep breathing. Whether you are to talk to potential clients or make a presentation to your team, make sure that you remember to breathe deeply and evenly before and during your speech.

Shifting focus outwards

Paul L. Witt, PhD, assistant professor of communication studies at Texas Christian University, believes that many people perform worse than they could because they focus too much on their physical symptoms (i.e. butterflies, shaky hands, sweaty palms) and on their embarrassment instead of concentrating on their breathing and their speech. This problem could be easily avoided by shifting focus from how we feel or look to the message we want to share with our audience.

Visualizing

Visualization or mental rehearsal has been routinely used by many top athletes as a part of the training for a competition. In addition to athletics, research has shown that visualization helps to improve performance in such areas as communication, public speaking and education.

To ensure that your presentation goes smoothly, aside from actual preparation and the rehearsal of your speech, take 10-15 minutes a day to relax, close your eyes and visualize the room you are speaking in, the people in the auditorium and yourself confidently delivering your speech, smiling, and moving across the stage.

Focusing on facts, not fears

Instead of focusing on irrational fears (e.g. mind going blank, audience getting bored) concentrate your thoughts on positive facts such as: "I have practiced my speech many times", "I am an expert on this topic", "I have notes with major bullet points to keep the structure of my talk". Focusing on positive facts and on what you can offer takes your thoughts away from irrational scenarios about what can go wrong.

Building your speech on clarity, not complexity

While it is often tempting to include as much useful information in your speech as possible, practice shows that this might not be a good idea. Organizing the speech or presentation around two three main points, allows you to relax and not worry so much about running out of time or forgetting to mention something important to the listeners.

4   Components of a Successful Speech

4.1   Introduction

"The success of your presentation will be judged not by the knowledge you send but by what the listener receives." - Lilly Walters

Given the choice many of us would prefer to submit a written report rather than get up and convey the same information orally. And it is not only fear of public speaking that holds us back. The written language holds many advantages. Written words can be chosen with greater deliberation and care. Written arguments can be expressed in a sophisticated, complex and lengthy manner and the readers have the option of taking in the text at a pace that is comfortable for them and even re-reading it if they choose to do so.

This degree of precision is hard to achieve when delivering a speech. The presenter does not have the same amount of time to choose the words that would best explain their opinion or idea. While the listeners have to rely only on their cognitive skills to recall and analyze the message.

On the other hand, verbal communication can be significantly more effective in expressing the meaning of the message to the audience. The speaker has an opportunity to use other means of communication that written language does not allow.

Let us take a look at the other means of communication available to speaker besides the power of the spoken word.

These include:

-   Storytelling
-   Body language
-   Tone of voice
-   Pauses
-   Visual cues

4.2   Storytelling

4.2.1   The Importance of Storytelling in a Public Speech

Everyone loves to listen to stories. A well told story has an almost hypnotic effect on the listeners. People might forget what you wore during a presentation or some of the charts, graphs and statistical data shown to them, but they will never forget the stories that you told them.

Many leaders and managers avoid storytelling in their presentations, believing that they have to keep their speech formal and business-like. This is one of the main reasons they often fail to grab their audience's attention and establish an atmosphere of trust and respect with their listeners.

In the business world whether you are speaking in front of two hundred people or making a presentation to your client, do not be afraid to include a few personal stories in your speech.

Professional public speakers use storytelling in their presentations for a variety of purposes which includes to:

Make statistical data, graphics and facts more vivid and interesting

Relieve tension

- Make important points of the presentation memorable
- Establish a connection with the particular audience
- Emphasize the message
- Introduce controversial issues
- Encourage thinking
- Shape people's beliefs
- Raise the energy level of the group
- Motivate people to act

4.2.2   Definition of Storytelling

Storytelling can be defined as a structured narrative account of real or imagined events that is widely used in public speaking as a medium for sharing, interpreting and offering the content of the story to the listeners.

The best stories to use in your public speech may involve true facts from your life; self-effacing humorous facts about your past mistakes, and challenges; success stories from famous people's biographies; and stories that explore the history of your business.

4.2.3   Do's and Don'ts of Storytelling

Not every story will grab your audience's attention and interest. There are a few important points that should be taken into consideration when choosing the right story for your speech:

Do's

- Always make your story relevant to the subject at hand
- Keep your stories simple and short
- Eliminate inconsequential detail
- Space stories at intervals to reemphasize your message
- Make sure the plot of the story involves a lesson or a transformation outcome that your listeners can relate to and benefit from.
- Use appropriate body language and facial expressions to convey emotions to your listeners.
- Use elements of the story that your audience can relate to (e.g. people, places, and familiar facts).
- Emphasize the adjectives and verbs in your stories to make them sound more interesting.
- Learn your stories by heart

Don'ts

- Do not use more than two or three stories on the same topic as each successive one will lose its impact
- Do not use terms that are foreign to the experience of the audience
- Do not fill stories with too many characters, events or details

"What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Body language is the process of non-verbal communication when our physical, mental and emotional states are manifested through conscious and unconscious body movements and gestures.

Numerous psychological findings show that non-verbal communication and especially body language accounts for as much as 55% of the message received by the audience. While words for the most part are perceived and interpreted by our rational mind, our physical gestures and facial expressions reach and are interpreted on a much deeper subconscious level. You have probably noticed it yourself many times – a person can say all the right words to convince you to do something, yet a part of you still resists listening to that person.

The main reason behind this resistance is contradictive body language. While we can choose our words carefully, our body language often portrays our real thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

It means that in many professional and personal situations what you say may have a lesser impact on your listeners than how you say it.

Still the majority of business speakers spend very little or no time at all thinking about their body language as they prepare a speech. This often proves to be a big mistake, as appropriate use of body language signals your confidence and conviction in your material and ideas, helps you to say more in less time and increases understanding and retention of what has been said.

Therefore, learning to use effective body language during your presentations as well as 'reading' the gestures and facial expressions of your listeners goes a long way to improving your communication skills and becoming a better public speaker.

Posture

Slouching shoulders and tensed muscles and abrupt, anxious movements might not be so obvious to the speaker, but this nervousness, tension and lack of conviction are quickly transmitted to the audience.

If you want your listeners to feel comfortable and interested by your speech, make sure that you keep a relaxed and upright posture. Do not lean or grip the lectern as if your life depends on it and avoid shifting your weight from one foot to another as it can become distracting.

Body Placement

Often, new speakers trap themselves behind a podium, using it as a 'psychological' barricade between themselves and their audience. Needless to say, doing this does not help to establish a connection with the audience or keep them interested in the message. Even if you usually speak from behind a lectern it is a good idea to step away occasionally. Movement in the direction of your listeners is a sign of trust and openness. Movement is also a great way to make a clear transition from one point to another, allowing a speaker to quickly regain the listeners' attention.

Arms

While on stage, be careful of using hand gestures that reveal anxiety such as clenching your hands together, clutching notes, fiddling with your clothing, or hiding your hands in your pockets. Even if you feel nervous, practice speaking with your arms relaxed at your sides as it helps to convey your calm attitude, sincerity and openness.

Facial expression

 When it comes to establishing a connection with your audience and winning their admiration there is nothing more effective than a genuine smile. As a speaker, you should be the first one to demonstrate your sympathy and interest in your audience and the best way to do it is by smiling and looking at your listeners as you talk.

4.4   Tone of voice

4.4.1. Introduction

"*Talk low, talk slow, and don't talk too much.*" -John Wayne

A speaker's confidence, emotional state and attitude is often revealed in the tone of voice.

In the area of public speaking your voice becomes a powerful instrument that allows you to engage, charm and encourage your audience to listen.

> In fact, tone of voice accounts for approximately 33% of the transmitted message, while the actual words that you say are responsible for only 7% of communication.

It may mean that people are more influenced by the sound and quality of an individual's voice than by its content.

Of course, these findings do not imply that the weight of the spoken words should be ignored or that it diminishes. They, however, demonstrate that the effect of vocal cues on your listeners have to be taken into consideration when preparing your speech and delivering it in public.

In order to better grasp the impact that your voice has on an audience try to recall a public speaker or an old University professor who talked in a monotone voice.

How difficult was it to keep your focus on what was being said?

Speakers who talk in a tone with no variations, which usually happens when a public speaker is reading the speech or recalling it verbatim, quickly lose their audience's attention and even put some of their listeners to sleep.

To avoid people dozing off or daydreaming during your presentation you have to learn to control your tone of voice and use it to make your speech more expressive and hypnotizing.

4.4.2   Paralanguage

The study dedicated to the vocal part of non-verbal communication is called paralinguistics, while the term "paralanguage" refers to the non-verbal elements of communication as:

- pace (speed)
- pitch (highness or lowness of voice)
- volume (loudness)
- and, in some cases, enunciation of vocal speech.

Let us take a look at how these elements apply and affect public speaking:

4.4.3   Speech Pace

Pace of the speech is the speed at which we say our thoughts out loud.

Often when people feel nervous or excited, they tend to rush through their delivery, hoping to get the presentation over as quickly as possible.

As you can probably guess, talking at a fast pace makes it challenging for the listeners to mentally keep up with the speaker and follow the speaker's train of thought. While some of the message might get through, most will not, as people will quickly lose interest in the presentation.

On the other hand, speaking at a slow pace leaves your audience too much time to process your message and their thoughts will soon start to wander off to other topics.

Experienced public speakers often vary their pace during a presentation to hold their audience's attention over a long period of time and add spice to their speech. However, the biggest part of a presentation should be delivered at rate that allows your listeners to grasp your message and let it sink in.

It is worth mentioning that psychological experiments conducted by Smith and Shaffer in 1991 suggest that when messages are counter-attitudinal, faster speakers were more persuasive than slower speakers. This might be the one of the factors that has contributed to Anthony Robbins' success as a motivational speaker, as his quick speech rate allows him to effectively persuade his listeners to change their dysfunctional habits and act on their goals.

However, Smith and Shaffer also demonstrated that when an audience inherently agrees with the message slower speech rate tends to be more persuasive than a quick one.

3 Ways to Improve your Speech Pace

If people sometimes tell you "Could you repeat that please?" or "I'm sorry, I did not get that", the chances are that you are talking too fast. This means that during your presentation or public speaking event you will speak even faster, making it really hard for your listeners to follow your ideas or thoughts.

There are a few ways you can bring you speech to an appropriate pace and win your audience's attention.

Steady your breathing

As mentioned in a previous chapter, fear and nervousness that many people experience during a presentation is accompanied by physical reactions of the body such as increased heart rate, muscle tension and shallow breathing. Part of the reason why people talk faster during public events is because they run out of air and try to finish the phrase as quickly as possible. Doing this only increases the agitation and makes the voice sound squeezed and strained because they are talking from the top of their lungs with a tight throat, jaw and face.

One of the simplest ways to slow down and regain your balance during a presentation is to get your breathing under control. When you feel overly agitated or are racing through the words during your speech, pause and take a few deep breaths before continuing.

Focus on the enunciation

When we focus on pronouncing words clearly we unwillingly slow down, stop slurring and eliding syllables as we speak, which makes it much easier for our listeners to understand and process our message.

Reflect about punctuation in the speech

Oral speech, just as a written one, should include and make use of punctuation. It has to be clear to the audience where one phrase ends and the other one starts. Yet, often fast-speakers tend to ignore phrasing, not pausing for commas, hyphens, question marks and jamming the phrases together. A good way to slow down is to think of how you would express this idea in a written form and to use your speech rate to emphasize the importance of the message or create anticipation for what you are about to say.

If you feel that you might be a fast speaker, the rule of thumb is to speak at a pace that is slightly slower than what you are comfortable with.

How to pace your speech correctly?

Many people who are just starting to master the art of public speaking have a common doubt – How much information to include in the talk in order to communicate the message and fit it in the time frame allowed for each speaker?

On average the appropriate pace for a speech is around 1,000 words per seven minutes (around 140-150 words per minute). If you are writing your speech down you can quickly multiply the number of minutes that you have at your disposal by the number of words you say per minute.

For example, if you have 20 minutes to deliver a presentation, it means that your speech would involve 2,800 – 3,000 words.

20 minutes x **150** words/minute = **3,000** words

Note that more time has to be set apart for the jokes and speeches that require the audience's participation.

4.4.4   Pitch

Pitch is a placement of voice on the musical scale ranging from high to low. Usually men speak in a lower pitch (about 120 Hz) than women (220 Hz).

Research shows that low-pitch speaking voices, both for men and women are preferable to the listeners as they are associated with authority, credibility, strength and self-confidence. A great example of a low-pitch speaking voice is that of American actor James Earl Jones. Many remember him as the voice of Darth Vader in Star Wars and Simba's dad in The Lion King.

High-pitched voices, on the contrary, are less pleasant to the ears of the audience as they are perceived as less persuasive, weaker, less truthful and more nervous. Partly, this unconscious assumption holds true, as the nervousness of a speaker is often reflected in a high-pitched, "thin" or nasal sounding voice or in the habit of raising the pitch at the beginning or end of the phrase.

While there are no "golden" voice standard to fit all, voice coaches usually suggest public speakers talk at the lower end of their speaking voice to make it sound more rich and expressive.

Variation of voice pitch during the presentation

We have already mentioned that speaking in a monotone voice makes the message sound bland, unemotional and even boring.

Varying your voice in pitch during a presentation is the easiest way to:

- Avoid monotony and hold the audience's interest
- Add color and excitement to the speech
- Make certain words and ideas stand out
- Appear relaxed and confident to the listeners

When preparing your speech, it is important to identify and note the exact words or phrases that you would like to empathize and help you listeners to remember. For example, you may use a higher pitch voice for excitement and a lower pitch to add weight and seriousness to the message.

4.4.5   Volume

Volume refers to the power of loudness of your voice. It is one of the simplest areas of modulation to master by public speakers, as it often depends on the size of the audience and the settings the speech is delivered in.

Clearly, the volume of the voice should not be too high so that it looks as if you are shouting or too low, where your listeners have difficulty hearing you. However, varying the loudness of your voice during presentation can be very effective in stressing an important or dramatic point, express strong emotions or to build suspense and make people lean forward to hear what is being said.

4.5   The Power of Pause

"The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause." - Mark Twain

As strange as it may seem to many executives and business leaders, who are accustomed to persuading and managing other people - public speaking is not just about talking in public.

> It is about listening to your audience and letting the silence talk for you.

In most cases there is no need to fill the silence with meaningless words such as "uhm", "like", and "you know". Doing this only distracts the audience from what is being said and gives the impression of nervousness and lack of clarity.

Accomplished speakers are aware of this and often use the power of pause to:

- raise the impact of a remark
- bridge ideas
- underline the last thing that was said
- create anticipation for the next remark
- instill more humor and passion into the presentation
- give time for the listeners to absorb the information
- leave the room for reflection after questions

Most pauses used during public speaking can be divided in four main categories:

Short pause

Short pauses that last from half-a-second to two seconds are mainly used for separating thoughts, emphasizing the last word that was said or building anticipation for what is coming.

Spontaneity pause

A spontaneity pause is used when the speaker is searching for the right word or pretending to reflect on something. Spontaneity pauses, are not necessarily "unplanned", but they make the speech look more natural, more polished and less rehearsed.

Long pause

Long pauses can last anywhere from three seconds to a couple of minutes and they are very powerful. They command the audience's attention by literally creating tension in the auditorium. Long pauses should be used only by experienced public speakers who feel comfortable talking in front of large groups of people. Otherwise, they may become unnerving both for the presenter and for the listeners.

Pseudo pause

The main purpose of a pseudo pause, just like a regular pause, is to bring people's attention back to what is being said and underline the last sentence. However, instead of holding the pause the speaker repeats and stresses their last remark. Mindful repetition gives an additional moment for the listeners to really absorb and memorize the information.

While there are many tips, tricks and techniques that can be used to improve business and interpersonal communication skills, slowing down and using pauses correctly is one of the simplest ways to create an impression of professionalism and intelligence.

If you are new to public speaking it might be helpful to write your speeches fully in order to identify and effectively place the power words that should be underlined by pauses. However, with practice you will learn to instinctively speak this way which will noticeably increase the impact of your presentations.

4.6   Visual aids

They often say that a picture is worth a thousand words. Adding a visual dimension to your presentation can make it look more vivid, graphic and professional-looking. Although, not every business presentation or public speaking event should forcedly be accompanied by slide shows, graphs and pictures. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is a mere 269 words long, but it would take over 2000 pictures to transmit the same message to the audience.

When planning your public speech or your presentation you should always keep your main objective in mind.

- What is the purpose of your speech?
- What is it that you want to achieve with your performance?
- What do you want your listeners to take from your presentation?

Is your goal to motivate, empower or persuade your audience to take action? In this case you might not need to use visual aids, as your listeners already know what they should be doing. Slides of explanations, charts, graphs and pictures will not add any value to the presentation. On the contrary, doing too may actually interfere with the momentum and weaken the emotional connection established by the speaker with the audience.

On the other hand, if your goal is to help your listeners understand and remember some key points of your presentation, there is no doubt that you can benefit enormously from including some visual elements and data in your presentation.

4.6.1   Why adding visual dimension to your speech?

As mentioned previously, not every speech has to be backed up with PowerPoint presentations, statistical research graphs and videos, in order to become memorable. Yet wisely-chosen visuals aids can take the speech from being "barely informative" to "utterly brilliant".

In addition some convincing scientific evidence suggests that including visual support in your presentation makes it more persuasive and easier to remember.

Psychological studies conducted in the field of education reveal a few interesting facts on how we learn and retain different types of information:

- Approximately 83% of learning occurs visually and only 11% through hearing. When it comes to analyzing and committing information to memory our mind places greater importance on visual images and not to the spoken words.
- Visual aids add impact and clarity to the presentation as they allow a speaker to appeal to more than one sense at the same time, thereby increasing the audience's understanding of abstract concepts and complex data material.
- The retention level that the listeners demonstrate three days after a public speaking event is 6 times greater when visual aids are included in the presentation rather than when they are not.

After analyzing the research findings it is safe to say that including a visual dimension to weekly business reports, product presentations and other speaking events can be beneficial in many ways, as doing so:

- Multiplies understanding of the message
- Enhances retention level of the valuable information
- Helps the audience to organize complex ideas
- Allows the speaker to gain and to maintain attention
- Helps to illustrate the sequence of events
- Allows the speaker to add humor and create excitement

- Encourages gestures and movement on the part of the speaker that make it easier to establish a connection with the audience

Used wisely visual aids can turn into a powerful tool that helps your listeners remember your speech, while allowing you to prove, reinforce and engage in your ideas.

While poorly selected visuals or too many of them can serve as a distraction to the listeners as they bury the message and take the focus away from the presenter - i.e. YOU.

4.6.2   What are visual aids?

Once you have decided to add a visual dimension to your speech it is critical to choose visual aids that empower your message, stimulate and create an emotional response in your audience as well as work well in the physical settings of your presentation.

When public speakers talk about visual aids they usually intend one of the five communication power tools: flip charts, overhead projectors, slide shows, handouts and props.

Flip Charts

Flip charts are one of the most commonly used visual supports in business presentations for briefing smaller, more informal groups of people. As the name implies, a flip chart is a large pad of paper on an easel which allows the speaker to illustrate or write down their ideas and then simply flip the used sheet of paper and start anew. Flip charts are quick, inexpensive, portable, universally understood communication tool that does not require electricity or hi-tech knowledge.

Overhead projectors

Overhead projectors are similar in many respects to flipcharts. They are convenient, unpretentious, and can be ideal in transferring data for an audience settings of 20 to 50 people. Many smaller companies and organizations are still using overhead projectors and transparencies in meetings and team-training workshops, though, this system is being largely replaced by LCD projectors and interactive whiteboards. If you are looking to impress your audience with something more high tech, slide shows will be your best bet.

Slide shows

With the advent of computer programs like PowerPoint and Keynote it is now easier than ever to put together a professional looking slide show in just a couple of hours. A slideshow is a series of pictures, diagrams, maps and charts projected on to a screen. The main objective of a slide show is to reinforce the oral presentation and to 'sell' the message, the product or the company without being too aggressive or 'salesy'.

One of the biggest strengths of this communication tool is its universality. Whether you are presenting your idea to four hundred professionals or holding a weekly meeting for selected members of your team, you can still win greatly from weaving a slide show into your presentation.

Handouts

Handouts are printed copies of notes and slides given to the listeners during or after the presentation. Handouts are often unjustly disregarded by many speakers even though they come in very handy, especially during lengthy business presentations that contain vast amounts of facts, figures and data. Quick and inexpensive to make, handouts allow your audience to follow your presentation, gain added information and even take it home with them.

Props

A prop is an object used during the presentation to help illustrate or reinforce a point. Using a prop that relates to the content of the speech, can be an original way to create an atmosphere of surprise, draw people's attention to the speaker and help people recall the point of your speech weeks and even months after the presentation.

While all of the above-mentioned visual supports can enhance and add interest to your performance on the stage, slide shows without a doubt are the most popular and the most misused visual communication tool out there.

There are many questions that public-speakers-to-be face when they prepare their first PowerPoint or Keynote presentations – What is the best number of slides to use in the presentation? How much text to put on the slides? What size fonts to use? How much time to dedicate to each slide in order to stay on the same page with the audience?

The prominent Silicon Valley capitalist, author and entrepreneur **Guy Kawasaki** shares his Universal 10-20-30 Rule that answers most of these questions and offers valuable advice that both startup entrepreneurs and experienced business executives can benefit from.

4.6.3   10-20-30 Rule for Effective Business Presentations

After listening to hundreds of entrepreneurs trying to pitch their potential product to him, Guy Kawasaki elaborated his well known 10-20-30 Rule, designed to encourage speakers to make smarter, sharper and more successful business presentations.

Written as a formula **Guy Kawasaki's 10-20-30 Rule** looks like this:

10 slides + **20 minutes** + **30 point font** = **effective business presentation**

10 slides.

Guy Kawasaki believes 10 to be the optimal number of slides for any PowerPoint or Keynote presentation. Guy's premise, "*a normal human being cannot comprehend more than ten concepts in a meeting … If you must use more than ten slides to explain your business, you probably don't have a business.*"

There is no need to overcomplicate your presentation with too many minor facts and details. Identify two or three main ideas you want your audience to take away from your presentation and build your speech around them.

20 minutes

Twenty minutes is the longest amount of time your business presentation or product pitch should last. This leaves you, as a speaker, anywhere from 20 seconds to 2 minutes for each slide. Try not to stay on each slide for too long, as you can quickly lose your listeners' attention. If you have more time to deliver your speech, you might use it to interact with your audience, answer questions, and clarify some points.

30 point font

30 point font is the smallest font size you should use on your slides. The reasons for doing so are twofold. First, using smaller font will make your message challenging to read, especially to people sitting in the back rows. Second, choosing bigger size font forces you, as a speaker, to put less text on your slides, keeping your presentation simple and preventing you from reading it.

Although, Guy Kawasaki's 10-20-30 Rule offers some valuable advice for preparing effective PowerPoint and Keynote presentation, it is important to remember that there is no universal formula that works in all public speaking settings and for every audience. Usually when preparing your presentation you should also take into consideration a few technical details such as the lightning of the room, the distance between the audience and the screen, the time of day, the quality of the projector and so on…

4.6.4   Do's and Don'ts of Visual Presentations

Do's:

- Make sure the details of your presentation can be seen from all sides of the room. People should not exhaust their eyes to see it.
- Keep your visuals simple and clutter free. One image should demonstrate one concept or contain one message.
- Choose professional-looking images for your presentation. Spelling mistakes and poor quality images have a negative impact on your credibility and professionalism.
- Select visual aids that have relevance to your audience. Use images that your audience is familiar with.
- Keep visual aids brief. Do not spend too much time explaining each slide
- Use charts and graphs to support the presentation of numerical information.
- Use a laser pointer to direct the audience's attention to the part of an image or graphic that might not be obvious to them.

Don'ts:

- Do not turn your back to the audience when explaining your visual aids.
- Do not read from your visuals. If the audience can read what you are saying, there is no point in listening to the speech
- Do not place more than one message on each slide, as it confuses the audience
- Do not over-use color or mix different fonts
- Do not assume that your images are self-explanatory. Most visual aids should be explained and even linked to a particular story.
- Do not wave the laser pointer all over the screen as you talk. It is distracting and makes it hard to keep up with your speech.
- Do not just list the information. Make a point with each slide!

5   The Three P's of a Successful Speech

5.1   Introduction

The positive outcome of a speech does not depend solely on the oratory skills of the speaker. It is influenced by many factors such as the topic of presentation, the attitude of the audience, the quality of the material, the length of the speech and so on. Some of factors are out of the speaker's control. However, the remaining 98% of the success will depend on how well the presenter follows the Three P's:

- Preparation
- Practice
- Performance

At each of these stages public speakers should watch out for pitfalls that can trip them up.

5.2   Preparation

"Only the prepared speaker deserves to be confident." - Dale Carnegie

Here is why the most experienced public speakers never go to talk in front of an audience unprepared - they know that speech preparation is their credibility.

> It is true that the success or failure of a speech becomes evident on the day of the speaking engagement. However, the outcome of the speech is largely predetermined by the weeks of preparation undertaken.

If you have not done your homework well, it will show on the day of the speech.

Just like hours of material research, preparation and planning will help you to reduce nervousness and appear more confident and more knowledgeable to your listeners. As you walk onto the podium feeling the eyes of your audience on you, you will be grateful for every bit of effort you have invested into your speech preparation.

5.3   A Vital Step before the Speech Preparation

In order to make your speech both interesting and memorable for the listeners, it is important to consider three key elements:

- The audience – WHO is the speech written for?
- The purpose – WHAT is the main objective of the speech?

- The direction of the speech – HOW will the speech be presented?

WHO: You can spend weeks researching your subject and preparing elaborate visual aids, but if you do not understand the people who will be listening to you, you will not be able to reach them. Knowing your audience – their number, age, gender, professional background and interests will give you a few valuable ideas on what to talk about and how to find the right angle for the speech that is both original and easy for your listeners to understand. Find out beforehand if the head of the company will be present? If all participants are experts in the topic? If there are people from different technological and cultural backgrounds?

WHAT: The purpose of the presentation does not end with simply delivering the information. Why are you speaking? What do you want the audience members to know, think, believe, or do as a result of your presentation? Is your goal to inspire? To entertain? To Persuade? To educate? To sell? Or to challenge old beliefs and dogmas? Identifying the main objective of the speech helps to choose the best presentation style. For example, a speech that has as its main goal to "sell" an idea to potential investors will sound differently from a speech that is designed to educate a group of employees on a new marketing strategy.

HOW: Professional speakers plan on HOW they are going to present the material before even thinking about WHAT it is that they want to say. Preparing a speech is similar to directing a movie. As a public speaker you become a director of your presentation, not just a mere actor repeating the words. There are some organizational details of the speech that need to be decided upon and brought together.

For example, you should know if you have to prepare any handouts to give at the end of you presentation? If you want to invite another guest to talk about your product or your company? Whether or not your speech includes showing any videos or slide shows? If you want to leave time for Q&A session at the end of your speech? All these seemingly insignificant details make a huge difference in your presentation and can not be left until the last possible minute.

5.4   Finding time to Prepare Your Speech

When you are developing a new presentation set about an hour of time for each minute that you spend speaking on the stage. In other words, if your presentation lasts 20 minutes you should block off at least 20 hours for material research, presentation development, outlining of the speech and for its rehearsal. 20 hours may seem like a lot of time at first, but at the end it is the hours of preparation and continuous effort that makes the speech look effortless and spontaneous to the audience.

<div style="border:1px solid black; text-align:center; font-weight:bold;">
1 Hour of Preparation = 1 Minute of Presentation
</div>

5.5   SMART Speech Preparation

After you have learned as much as you can about your audience, their needs and speech settings, the next step is to create an amazing presentation. Easier said than done?

What ideas do you want to share with your audience? How do you make your presentation memorable? What do you start with?

All these questions in combination with a blank sheet of paper or an empty Word file can intimidate and overwhelm even the most creative and knowledgeable people.

A SMART Speech Preparation formula allows any speaker to overcome writer's block and put together a great presentation.

1. **S**elect your material.

The information presented by a speaker can be compared to the **tip of an iceberg**. Only 20% of an iceberg is seen above water. The rest is hidden below the surface. Similar your knowledge and experience of the subject should be much greater and much deeper than what you decide to cover during your presentation.

It is crucial that your listeners are not left with the impression that they know more on the subject than you do, otherwise you will quickly lose your credibility while your presentation will lose its appeal.

To make sure that this does not happen, gather as much information as possible about the topic of your speech:

- Start with what you already know. Write down all the information that might be interesting or relevant to your listeners.
- Choose 1-3 major points that you must get across to your listeners and organize your presentation around them.
- Remember, that the best speeches should leave the listeners with insights and "aha!" moments that they did not have before they went to hear you speak. Therefore, try to think 'out of the box' and find a unique angle from which to tackle a particular event, topic or story. This is not always easy to do, but finding an effective story angle allows you to put a spin on your speech, making it useful and captivating at the same time.
- Conduct solid research to supplement your presentation with stories, examples, interesting facts, statistical data and visual aids which should give you fresh ideas on how to make your speech even better. If you are intending to use statistics and financial data, make sure that they are meaningful, easy to understand and, above all reliable and up-to date.

Ideally, you should learn something new from your research, adding to the mass of your "iceberg" knowledge.
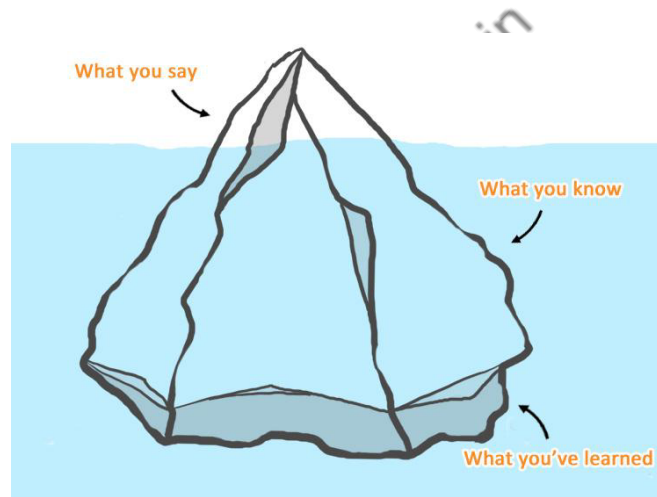
2. **M**ap out an outline.

Planning a presentation or speech can be challenging, particularly if you are starting with a relatively blank sheet. Where to start? What ideas to focus on? How to make it work?

Creating an outline of the presentation could be a great starting point. An overview or an outline of the presentation allows you to organize ideas, highlight the major points, and bring together the elements of the speech in a logical sequence.

Failing to elaborate a solid outline can make the whole presentation look shaky and unconvincing.

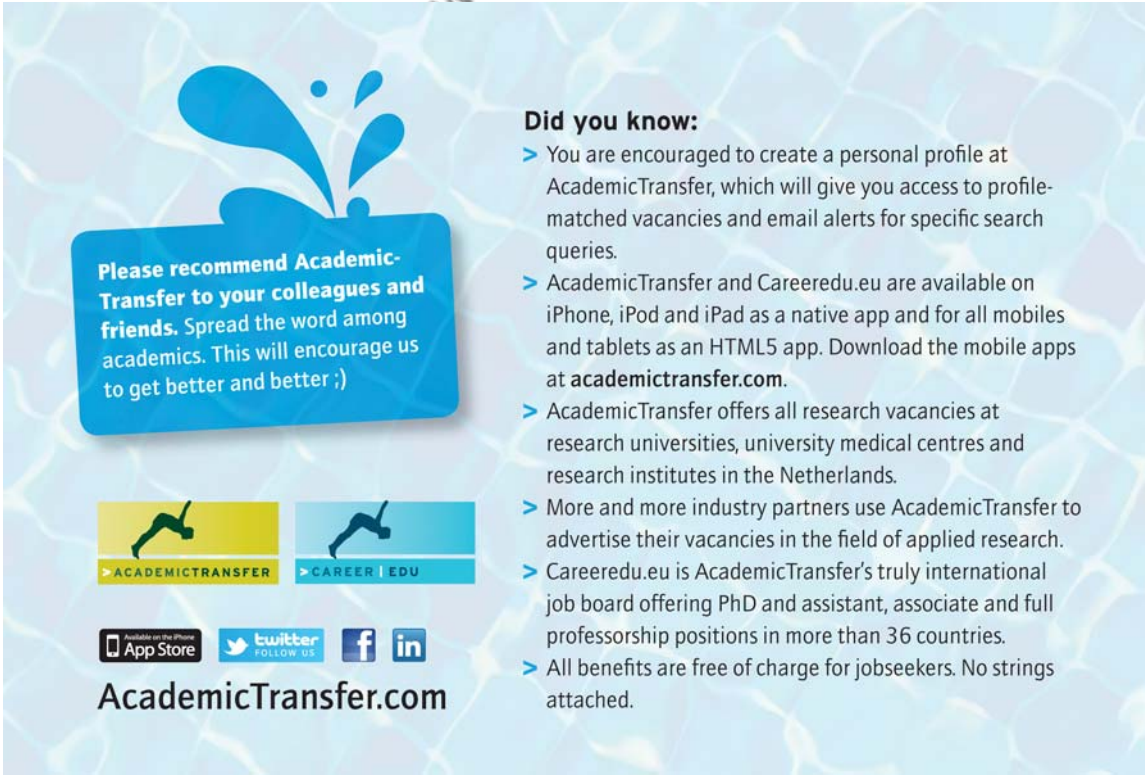The basic speech outline template contains 5 main elements:

- Attention grabber
- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion
- Call-to-action

Let's look at each of these elements separately.

Attention grabber is an unusual statement, a question, a gesture, a story, a prop, or a long pause that is intended to start the presentation on a strong note, to "grab" the audience's attention and to help the speaker build confidence in the very beginning of the speech.

A challenging question "Do you think it is possible to take your company to the next level by firing yourself and going on a year long vacation?" or a powerful quote "The successful man is the one who finds out what is the matter with his business before his competitors do." (Roy L. Smith) are some of great examples to open your presentation. A phrase, "I'm delighted to be here today" is not.

Introduction is the opening part of your presentation where you state your core message, list key points that you would like to talk about in your speech, or name a problem that needs to be solved. Ideally, a well-written introduction should prepare the audience for the main part of the speech, build anticipation and answer the question "What is in it for your listeners and why should they care?" If you can not answer these two questions, you probably have not studied your audience well enough.

Body of the speech makes up around 70% to 80% of your speech. It contains the detailed explanation of the key points stated in the introduction, supports the main theory and links various concepts together.

There are several options for structuring the elements of the presentation in an organized and logical manner. Most common ones used during business speaking events include:

- Timeline - the main points are arranged in sequential order
- Culmination - the key points are delivered in an order of increasing importance
- Cause-effect - a problem is presented, a solution is suggested and benefits are given
- Complexity - the ideas are listed parting from the broad vision to specific details

Conclusion summarizes the core message of the presentation, recaps the main points and states the main idea that has been mentioned throughout the presentation.

Conclusion should take only 5%, maximum 10% of your speech and, just as with the introduction, should end on a strong note.

Call to action is the closing punch line of the speech that leaves the audience with something to think about or empowers them to take specific action steps, be it "buying a product", "joining your companies fan page on FaceBook" or "investing $__ for __% of the shares".

This 5-part outline works for a wide range of speech topics and is adaptable to most types of presentation from business briefings to conferences, from fundraisers to social events.

3. **A**dd humor and personality

After you have mapped a clear outline of the presentation the next logical step of the SMART speech preparation is to create a written draft of your speech.

You do not have to write the whole speech, but you should definitely include the paragraphs that you do not want to forget or rephrase.

Just make sure that it does not sound like an essay or a detailed description of a scientific experiment. Whether you are explaining the confluence of multiple market dynamics on the company's profits or sharing the latest strategic decisions with your team, let your personality, your opinions and even your sense of humor shine through your speech.

The advice that the famous author, speaker and founder of Authentic Jobs Inc. - Cameron Moll gives everyone who wants to master the art of public speaking - is to entertain and provide the meaty content to the listeners.

He states:

> *"Your primary responsibility is to entertain a room full of people. This doesn't necessarily equate to jokes and magic tricks, but it does mean that the content of your presentation, and the delivery of that content, should be compelling and engaging. Keeping the audience's eyes on you rather than their laptops benefits both you and the audience."*

Keep that in mind when writing your presentation. Write as if you had to speak to just one person in the audience, not a faceless mass of people.

Avoid hype, big words and corporate talk for something genuine and meaningful. Your listeners should feel that you are talking to them, not at them.

4. **R**evise your speech

After you have finished the draft of your speech, think of how it can be improved even further.

- Consider making your sentences shorter, especially the ones loaded with emotional content, e.g. "Failure is not an option", "No excuses", "If not us – who? If not now - when?", "Period." Doing this will not only make your message more powerful and easier to understand, but also creates more pause-and-breathe opportunities.
- For longer sentences consider putting the main verb early. For example, instead of saying "When we have all the facts and the rest of the marketing research data we will make a decision" say, "We will make a decision after we have all the facts and the rest of the marketing research data"
- Use memorable adjectives and adverbs to make your speech more powerful. There is a difference between stating "Our organization faces many challenges" and saying "Our organization faces many exciting challenges". The first sentence is impersonal, the second reflects your attitude and invites your listeners to look at the situation from a different perspective.
- Add strategically placed pauses for impact.
- Repeat the key idea over and over again throughout your presentation. It helps your listeners to remember it and allows you to tie your main concepts together. The repetition technique has been widely used by many public speakers including Martin Luther King in his speech "I have a dream" as well as Barack Obama in his speech following the 2008 New Hampshire primary, where he repeatedly used the phrase, "Yes we can"
- If possible incorporate stories into your speech. Even if you are giving a serious talk in front of a large group of professionals, it does not mean that your speech should sound flat and business-like. An inspirational story or a metaphor to demonstrate your point can go a long way in making your speech memorable and interesting.

- Include questions, phrases and stories that allow you to interact with your audience and establish an emotional connection with them. A great way to promote interaction with your audience is to ask them a question that they can relate to. One of the most common questions formula used by most successful public speakers is asking "Who has ever been/felt/did …, raise your hand!" while raising their hand as well.

5. **T**ie loose ends together.

Make sure that the ends of your speech are tied together, that you start and end with a strong statement, that your introduction is consistent with your conclusion, and that your visual aids are coherent and support your main ideas.

To Summarize:

A well-structured speech consists of a core message, supported by clear major points that are, in turn, explained further by adding relevant details and examples. If you decide to add a visual dimension to the presentation, your visual aids should enhance your presentation, not distract from it.

You can use the table below to double-check that you have done everything and to make sure that your presentation flows smoothly and all of its elements are tied together in a logical and meaningful way.

Main ideas	Supporting ideas	Details & Examples	Visuals
What are your main points and ideas?	What will you tell the audience to support your main points?	What details or examples do you have?	Will you have any visuals to help explain your points?

5.6   Practice

"If I don't practice the way I should, I won't play the way that I know I can." - Ivan Lendl

Public speaking, just as any other skill, requires constant practice in order to be improved. The more you talk in public, the more you train your mind and body to recognize speaking as a familiar and safe situation, the more confident you will feel in the spotlight.

As paradoxically as it may sound, practicing your speech ten, twenty and even thirty times before the actual speaking engagement is what will make your presentation look a lot more spontaneous, natural and effortless. Of course, practice alone will not necessarily make your performance stress-free, but practicing your speech at least a couple of times before the presentation holds 3 Significant Benefits:

- It allows you to discover awkward phrases and tongue-twisters that are hard to notice when you first write your speech.
- It reduces nervousness and helps to transform anxiety into excitement on the day of the presentation.
- It helps you to gauge your timing.

5.6.1   Practice alone

Before practicing your speech it might be a good idea to prepare **"cue" cards** or your cheat sheets that you will use during the presentation. The cue cards may contain the high-level speech elements mentioned in your outline, as well as transition phrases, key words, statistic data or punch lines that you want to share with your audience.

After you have your cue cards – you can start practicing your speech. Find a place where you will not be distracted by anything or anyone, close the door, turn your cell phone off and concentrate solely on your speech. As you practice, pay particular attention to the transition between sections and slides so that your presentation flows smoothly. An audience struggles to follow a speech, when a speaker loses their train of thought or jumps from one idea to another.

Many public speaking books advise new speakers practice in front of a mirror. Research suggests that this may not be as helpful as people often become distracted by how they look and lose their ability to stay focused on the content of the speech and the listeners.

The only case when practicing your speech in front of the mirror could be beneficial is when you want to 'polish' your body language and gestures for the presentation.

5.6.2   Practice in front of other people

Speaking in front of a small and supportive group of friends and family members can be the next step to overcoming stage fright and to train your mind to associate speaking in public with a positive experience, rather than a frightening one.

Always seek feedback from your audience at the end of a presentation. Ask for their opinion on topics such as:

- How convincing and intelligible your speaking was
- How interesting, useful and clear different parts of your presentation were
- How well you answered questions at the end of your speech
- What was their overall impression of your performance

Listen objectively to the feedback. Do not take any suggestions or observations as personal criticism. Instead seek ways to enhance your presentation and improve your performance.

5.6.3   Do the final dress rehearsal

The environment you are to speak in can have a huge part to play in shaping the final presentation of your speech. If it is possible try practicing at least once in the actual auditorium where the presentation will take place. Walk on the stage, consider where you will be in relation to the audience, test the required audio-visual components, note if your presentation is visible from all parts of the room. Then go all the way through your presentation without stopping.

Being familiar with your environment and having all the technological aids ready and tested will mean one less problem to worry about on the day of your public speaking event.

Some of the points to consider when rehearsing your presentation:

- Will your audience be able to see your presentation easily?
- Will you have to use a microphone or not?
- Is there a place to put your notes?
- What electronic devices are provided (e.g. LCD projector, screen, microphone) and what do you have to bring with you?

> Many fully prepared speeches fail because insufficient thought has gone into where they are to take place.

5.6.4   Other Opportunities to Practice

There is no need to wait for an occasion to speak publically in order to hone your public speaking skills. Clubs such as Toastmasters International, Association of Speakers Clubs (ASC), Rostrum, International Training in Communication (ITC), Speaking Circles, or POWER talk International offer their members an opportunity to learn the art of public speaking by observation, practice, and through completing a number of effective exercises.

5.7   Performance

"If something can go wrong it will." - Murphy's law

When getting ready for your speech, become a long-term optimist and a short-term pessimist. Believe in your heart that your presentation will go wonderfully and that the audience will love it, but prepare yourself for little slips, unexpected technical troubles, and other problems that may arise on the day of your performance.

> Plan your presentation keeping in mind every micro detail that could go wrong and finding effective solutions to either prevent or resolve it.

Leave the house early, to avoid traffic. Check your computer and LCD projector ahead of time. Think of unexpected and challenging questions that you could be asked during your presentation. Avoid eating a heavy meal or drinking coffee before the presentation, as doing so affects your vocal cords and your energy level.

Here are some tips that will allow you to improve your performance even more:

- **Relax before you get up to talk**. Remember to stop and take a few deep breaths to slow down your heart rate and reduce muscle tension. Feel your feet on the floor. Gently roll your shoulders back. This opens your chest, drops your shoulders, opens your throat, releasing tension and making you look more confident.

- **Greet your audience with a smile**. Even if the topic of your business presentation is a serious one, you can still greet your listeners with a genuine, welcoming smile to win their favor and regain your confidence.

- **Do not rush through your presentation**. Give your listeners time to absorb your concepts and key ideas.

- **Make yourself be heard**. Speak to the person sitting farthest away from you so that your speech can be easily heard by everyone in the room.

- **Face your audience at all times**. In presentations where visuals are used avoid turning your back to the listeners and looking at the slides too much. The audience is the focal point of your speech. Visuals are merely a tool to convey a message. Besides, speaking towards the screen or the wall makes it hard for your listeners to hear you.

- **Talk to people, not at them**. Find a few people that you know in the audience and imagine yourself talk directly to them. Shift your gaze through your audience and as you feel more confident, establish eye contact with other listeners as well.

- **Claim attention**. The attention span of an average person lasts about 5-10 minutes. It is the task of the speaker to keep the listeners focused on the presentation by bringing their attention back through fluctuation of the voice, storytelling, questions, and body language.

- **Do not stick your hands in your pockets**, hook your thumbs under your belt, or engage in other creative diversions as you speak.

- **Do not introduce a topic with** "Just real quick," "Briefly," or similar words. The subconscious message that your audience receives is "this isn't really important or relevant, but I'm going to inflict it on you anyway."

- **Answer any questions as succinctly and briefly as possible**. Not everyone may be interested in this specific question.

- **Do not diminish or underestimate your audience**. Even if you are a world-known expert in your area of expertise, it is still not a good idea to use phrases like "this is probably new to you" or "you probably don't know what this means", unless you are sharing ground breaking news that nobody has heard of.

- **Wrap up your talk on time**. People rarely want to listen to someone, who talks longer than was expected. Therefore, assign to a person that you know the task of giving you time cues, indicating when you have ten minutes left, five minutes, two minutes and when you should stop talking.

- **Never apologize for anything**: be it your presentation, your accent or your lack of knowledge in certain areas or your mistakes. You will quickly lose your credibility.

- **Be flexible**. Organize your business presentation and know it well enough to have the flexibility to skip certain parts or expand on others depending on the circumstances and non-verbal cues that you receive from your audience.

- **Be your best self**. Too often, people giving business presentations believe that to look professionally they need to act or speak in a certain way, a stiff way. There is a huge difference between being professional and being downright boring. People came to listen to YOU, so let your personality shine through. Share something real about yourself, either in words or delivery, which connects you to your listeners.

- **Have fun**. If a speaker is relaxed and enjoying every moment of their speech, it will make the speech much more enjoyable for the audience as well.
- **Connect with people after the presentation**. At the end of the speech, instead of recoiling backstage and doing a vicious deconstruction of every little mistake made during the presentation, continue to be fully present with your listeners. Talk to people, answer questions, accept invitations, exchange business cards, network and so on.

Analyze your performance the day after your presentation.

Approach your business presentation with calm clarity and some take time to reflect:

- How effectively did you handle nervous tension during your presentation?
- What technique(s) has helped you the most?
- When did your listeners appear more engaged with your talk?
- What ideas, images, and stories did they compliment on after the presentation?
- When were you most engaged with your listeners?
- How might you deliver the same presentation again based on what you now know?

Becoming a great public speaker, feeling at ease with the audience, controlling your body language and delivering killer business presentations takes some time. Of course, it would be much easier to just speak with one person at a time. However, in every business area, there comes a time to promote, influence, inspire, persuade or make a good impression on a much larger scale than the safety of a coffee nook. As you have learned from this book, speaking in public does not have to be something we should avoid at all costs.

With some creativity, intelligent planning and consistent practice absolutely ANYONE can become a brilliant public speaker.

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