

## 5.1 ORAL COMMUNICATION

Oral communication is the communication where the message or information exchanges by spoken words. It can be done by both face to face and also through mechanical devices. And definitely both will take place an important position in the organization. In an organization face to face communication can be done through conference, seminar, group discussion, personal interview, etc.

Mechanical devices play an important role in modern business communication process which include signals, telephone, mobile, e-mail, fax etc.

### 5.1.1 Advantages of Oral Communication

1. **Speed:** Once you make contact with your audience, there is no time lag between the transmission and reception of message.
2. **Speaker is able to get personal attention of the listener:** You might spend hours drafting a memorandum, letter or report only to have recipient scan it superficially or not read it at all. In a personal contact, however, you have much more command over the receiver's attention.
3. **It saves time:** Where action is required to be taken immediately, it is advisable to communicate orally.
4. **It saves money:** At one time you can communicate with more than one person and it saves money as compared to the written communication when it is within the organization.

5. **It allows instantaneous feedback:** When you speak directly to one or more listeners, you can respond to questions as soon as they arise. You can revise quickly if you have used the wrong word and offended or confused your audience.
6. **Supplemented by non-verbal clues:** The person receiving oral communication can combine it with the expressions and other non-verbal clues around the speaker, the message can be better understood.
7. It is extremely useful while communicating with groups at meetings, assemblies, etc.

### 5.1.2 Limitations of Oral Communication

Although it has many advantages, oral communication is not always the best approach. It suffers from the following disadvantages:

1. **No evidence:** There is no documentary proof of oral communication and as such the impact of oral communication is purely temporary.
2. The lengthy messages are not suitable for such type of communication, because of poor retention power of human being.
3. Expensive and time consuming when the communicator and receiver are far removed from each other or when the people who need to communicate are separated by longer distance, personal contact is expensive and time consuming. Even a cross-town trip for a half-hour meeting can take most of the morning or afternoon, depending upon traffic or weather.
4. Not appropriate when the matter is controversial.
5. **Serious deliberation is not possible:** A serious thought is not possible on the subject because the receiver has to take an immediate decision in response to the communication received.
6. **More prone to physical noise:** An oral message has more probability of getting distorted because of physical noise of speech, somebody interfering in between, and likewise.
7. Oral messages do not have any legal validity unless they are taped and made a part of permanent record.

## 5.2 TWO SIDES OF ORAL COMMUNICATION

The sender and the receiver are the two sides of oral communication. As sender, what are the different methods for making oral communication effectively are described in other section of chapter but as the receiver oral evaluation may include both positive comments and areas for improvement. Like feedback on any assignment, it is helpful to offer constructive criticism without personally attacking the character of the speaker. Let us suggest the following to receivers for providing oral or written feedback to oral presentations:

- **Be descriptive.** Describe what you observed the speaker doing rather than passing judgment, e.g. say “I did not hear a concluding statement” rather than “That was a stupid way to end your presentation.”
- **Be specific.** Give the speaker enough information so that she/he can improve for the next presentation, e.g. say “I would increase the font size on your PowerPoint slides because I had trouble reading the slides” rather than “Your visual aids were ineffective.”
- **Be positive.** “Sandwich” comments such that you begin with a positive comment, then offer suggestions for improvement, and end with a positive comment.

- **Be constructive.** Give specific suggestions for improvement rather than simply telling the speaker what they did wrong.
- **Be sensitive.** Use tactful language in giving feedback rather than offering blunt suggestions or comments, e.g. say “Speak a bit louder so those in the back of the room can hear you” rather than “I couldn’t hear a word you said—speak up!”
- **Be realistic.** Give the speaker feedback about things that he/she can actually change. Telling a speaker that she/he is too short is not helpful.

### 5.3 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

For making oral communication effective a speaker should take care of their body language, paralanguage, presentation style, time, place, etc. for details please refer chapter 2, section Seven Cs of oral communication and also refer chapter 9, for Effective presentation.

### 5.4 EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Listening is the receiver’s activity in oral communication. As the speaker has the responsibility to make effort to be understood, so the listener has the responsibility to be attentive and to make effort to understand the meaning of the speaker. Of all skills of communication, listening is the most important of all. The higher your position in an organization, the greater is your listening responsibility.

**Johnson:** The ability to understand and respond effectively to oral communication.

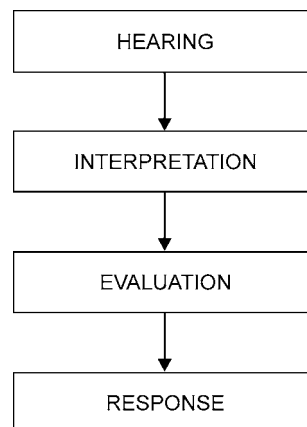
**M.V. Rodriques:** Listening is a process of receiving, interpreting and reacting to the message received from the sender.

**Leland Brown:** Listening is an activity that can be turned on and off consciously and unconsciously. It starts with the receiver’s becoming aware that they should listen and become attentive to what is being said.

#### LISTENING PROCESS

**Stage I:** At this stage, the listener simply paid attention to the speaker to hear the message. If you can repeat the speaker’s words, you have heard the message.

**Stage II:** This depends on the listener’s vocabulary, knowledge, experience and so on. If the listener fails to interpret the words correctly the message is misunderstood.



**Fig. 5.1:** Listening Process

**Stage III.** At this stage the listener decides what to do with the received information. When you are listening to a marketing talk, you may choose to believe or not to believe what you hear. The judgement you make at this stage of evaluation are crucial to the listening process.

**Stage IV.** The listener's response to the message may be in words or in body language. The response lets the speaker know whether the listener has got the message and what his/her reaction is.

#### **ADVANTAGES**

1. Listening helps to know the organization.
2. Listening helps to make better policies.
3. Listening mollify the complaining employees.
4. Listening is important for the success of the open-door policy.
5. Listening helps to spot sensitive areas before they become explosive.

#### **Guidelines for Effective Listening**

1. **Eye contact:** When one of the audience does not look at the speaker, it means, he is not interested in listening. A listener must exhibit a behaviour of making eye contact. It encourages the speaker.
2. **Bodily exhibitions:** A listener must show himself that he is interested in listening. Non-verbal signs can be used to exhibit affirmative head nods and appropriate facial expressions, eye contact etc., convey certain things to the speaker.
3. **Avoid distracting actions or gestures:** Looking at one's own watch, shuffle papers, playing with pencil, reading newspaper or letters and other distracting activities should not be practised.
4. **Ask question:** An effective listener always asks questions, clarifies doubts, seeks explanation and ensure clear understanding. This makes the speaker realise that he is really listening.
5. **Put the speaker at ease:** By your attitude, help the speaker become relaxed and aware of willing listener. Be not only seen to listen, but felt to listen.
6. **Avoid premature arguments:** Don't interrupt to question or argue about facts, 'That is not so.....', 'prove it.....' Good listener interpret the speaker after completing his speech.
7. **Listen patiently:** The speaker is entitled to be heard, even if you feel his approach is wrong.
8. **No personal bias:** It is always desirable to drop personal biases and attitudes about a speaker and his views. This one is the wrong habit and sometime for this reason speaker feel uneasy.
9. **Observe non-verbal cues:** Search out the main points. Observe the non-verbal cues like tone pitch, physical gesture etc., which too convey meaning to the message. A listener may note them down as these will help in revealing if the speaker appears to be sincere in his views.
10. **Avoid fake attention:** Many listeners develop the habit of faking attention. They steadfastly fix their eyes on the speaker and try to project themselves as good listeners. They usually miss out many important points made by the speaker.