

COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

STUDY GUIDE FOR MODULE ONE

(A full 'Study & Training Guide' will accompany the Study or Training Manual(s) you will receive soon by airmail post).

This Study Guide - like all our Training Materials - has been written by professionals; experts in the Training of well over three million ambitious men and women in countries all over the world. It is therefore essential that you:-

- * Read this **Study Guide carefully and thoroughly** BEFORE you start to read and study Module One, which is the first '**Study Section**' of a CIC Study or Training Manual you will receive for the Program for which you have been enrolled.
- * Follow the **Study Guide exactly**, stage by stage and step by step - if you fail to do so, you might not succeed in your Training or pass the Examination to gain the CIC Diploma.

* STAGE ONE

Learning how to **really STUDY** the College's Study or Training Manual(s) provided - including THOROUGHLY READING this **Study Guide**, and the full '**Study & Training Guide**' which you will soon receive by airmail post.

* STAGE TWO

Studying in accordance with the professional advice and instructions given.

* STAGE THREE

Answering Self-Assessment Test Questions/Exercises.

* STAGE FOUR

Assessing - or having someone assess for you - the standard of your answers to the Self-Assessment Test/Exercises.

* STAGE FIVE

Preparing for your Final Examination.

* STAGE SIX

Sitting the Final Examination.

Remember: your CIC Program has been **planned** by experts. To be certain of gaining the greatest benefit from the Course or Program, it is **essential** that you follow precisely each one of the **SIX stages** in the Program, as described above.

STAGE ONE is your thorough reading of this 'Study Guide'

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ABOUT CIC STUDY and TRAINING MANUALS

A CIC Study or Training Manual (which comprises 4 or 6 Modules - the first Module of which follows) supplied by the College as part of your Course or Program is **NOT** simply a text book. It must therefore **not** be read simply from cover to cover like a text book or another publication. It **MUST** be **studied**, Module by Module, exactly as explained in the following pages. Each CIC Study or Training Manual has been designed and written by specialists, with wide experience of teaching people in countries all over the world to become managers, administrators, supervisors, sales and accounting personnel, business-people, and professionals in many other fields.

Therefore, it is in **your own best interests** that you use the Study or Training Manuals in the way CIC's experts recommend. By doing so, you should be able to learn easily and enjoyably, and master the contents of the Manuals in a relatively short period of time - and then sit the Final Examination with confidence. Every Study Manual and Training Manual is written in clear and easy to understand English, and the meanings of any "uncommon" words, with which you might not be familiar, are fully explained; so you should not encounter any problems in your Studies and Training.

But should you fail to fully grasp anything - after making a thorough and genuine attempt to understand the text - you will be welcome to write to the College for assistance. You must state the **exact** page number(s) in the Study or Training Manual, the paragraph(s) and line(s) which you do not understand. If you do not give full details of a problem, our Tutors will be unable to assist you, and your Training will be delayed unnecessarily.

Start now by reading **carefully** the following pages about Stages Two, Three and Four. Do **NOT**, however, start studying the first Study or Training Manual until you are **certain** you understand **how** you are to do so.

STAGE TWO - STUDYING A CIC MODULE

STEP 1

Once you have read page 1 of this document fully and carefully, turn to the first **study section** - called **Module One** - of **Study or Training Manual One**. (Note: In some Manuals the term "Chapter" is used instead of "Module").

Read the whole of Module One at your normal reading pace, without trying to memorise every topic covered or fact stated, but trying to get "the feel" of what is dealt with in the Module as a whole.

STEP 2

Start reading the Module again from the beginning, this time reading more slowly, paragraph by paragraph and section by section. Make brief notes of any points, sentences, paragraphs or sections which you feel need your further study, consideration or thought. Try to absorb and memorise all the important topics covered in the Module.

STEP 3

Start reading the Module again from its start, this time paying particular attention to - and if necessary studying more thoroughly - those parts which were the subject of your earlier notes. It is best that you do **not** pass on to other parts or topics until you are **certain** you fully understand and remember those parts you earlier noted as requiring your special attention. Try to fix everything taught firmly in your mind.

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Note: You may not wish to, or be able to, carry out Steps 1, 2 and 3 one after the other. You could, for instance, carry out Steps 1 and 2 and then take Step 3 after a break.

STAGE THREE - ANSWERING SELF-ASSESSMENT TESTS

STEP 4

When you feel that you have **fully understood and learned everything** taught in the whole Module (and if necessary after a further careful read through it) turn to the Self-Assessment Test set at the end of it, and read the Questions/Exercises in it carefully. You do not have to attempt to answer any or all of the Questions/Exercises in the Test, but it is **best** that you do so, to the best of your abilities. The reasons for this are:-

- ❁ By comparing your answers with the Recommended Answers printed in the Appendix at the end of the Module, you will be able to assess whether you **really have** mastered everything taught in the Module, or whether you need to study again any part or parts of it.
- ❁ By answering Questions/Exercises and then comparing your attempts with the Recommended Answers, you will gain experience - and confidence - in attempting Test and Final Examination Questions/Exercises in the future. Treat the Self-Assessment Tests as being “*Past Examination Papers*”.

Professional Advice on Answering Self-Assessment Test (and Examination) Questions and Exercises

1. You may answer the Questions/Exercises in a Self-Assessment Test in any order you like, but it is best that you attempt **all** of them.
2. Read very carefully the first Question/Exercise you select, to be quite **certain** that you really **understand** it and what it requires **you to do**, because:
 - ★ some Questions/Exercises might require you to give full “written” answers;
 - ★ some Questions/Exercises (e.g. in English) might require you to fill in blank spaces in sentences;
 - ★ some Questions/Exercises (e.g. in bookkeeping) might require you to provide “worked” solutions;
 - ★ some Questions/Exercises (called “multiple-choice questions”) might require you only to place ticks in boxes against correct/incorrect statements.

In your Final Examination you could **lose marks** if you attempt a Question/Exercise in the wrong way, or if you misread and/or misunderstand a Question/Exercise and write about something which is not relevant or required.

3. Try to answer the Question/Exercise under “**true Test or Examination conditions**”, that is, **WITHOUT** referring back to the relevant section or pages of the Module or to any notes you have made - and certainly **WITHOUT** referring to the Recommended Answers. Try to limit to about two hours the time you spend on answering a set of Questions/Exercises; in your Final Examination you will have **only two hours**.
4. Although you are going to check your Self-Assessment Test answers yourself (or have a friend, relative or colleague assess them for you) practise writing “written” answers:-

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★ in clear, easy-to-read handwriting;

and

★ in good, grammatical language.

The Examiner who assesses your Final Examination answers will take into account that English might not be your national or main language. Nevertheless, to be able to assess whether you really **have** learned what we have taught you, he or she will need to be able to read and understand what you have written. You could lose marks if the Examiner cannot read or understand easily what you have written.

5. Pay particular attention to neatness and to layout, to spelling and to punctuation.
6. When “written” answers are required, make sure what you write is **relevant** to the Question/Exercise, and concentrate on **quality** - demonstrating your knowledge and understanding of facts, techniques, theories, etc. - rather than on quantity alone. Write fully and clearly, but **to the point**. If you write long, rambling Final Examination answers, you will waste time, and the Examiner will deduct marks; so practise the **right** way!
7. When you have finished writing your answer, read through what you have written to see whether you have left out anything, and whether you can spot - and correct - any errors or omissions you might have made.
Warning: some Questions/Exercises comprise two or more parts; make **certain** you have answered **all** parts.
8. Attempt the next Question/Exercise in the Self-Assessment Test in the same manner as we have explained in 1 to 7 above, and so on until all the Questions/Exercises in the Test have been attempted.

Note: There is no limit on how much time you spend on studying a Module before answering the Self-Assessment Test set on it, and some Modules are, of course, longer than others. You will, however, normally need to spend between twelve and fifteen hours on the thorough study of each Module - and that time may be spread over a number of days if necessary - plus approximately two hours on answering the Self-Assessment Test on each Module.

STAGE FOUR - ASSESSING YOUR ANSWERS

STEP 5

When you have answered all the Questions/Exercises set in Self-Assessment Test One to the best of your ability, compare them (or ask a friend, relative or a colleague/senior at work to compare them) with the Recommended Answers to that Test, printed in the Appendix at the end of the Module. In any case, you should thoroughly study the Recommended Answers because:-

★ As already explained, they will help you to assess whether you have really understood everything taught in the Module;

and

★ They will teach you how the Questions/Exercises in subsequent Self-Assessment Tests and in your Final Examination **should** be answered: clearly, accurately and factually (with suitable examples when necessary), and how they should be laid out for maximum effect and marks.

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MARKS AND AWARDS

To assist in the assessment and grading of your answers, the **maximum number of marks** which can be earned for each answer to a Self-Assessment Test Question/Exercise is stated, either in brackets at the **end of each one**.

The maximum number of marks for any one Test is 100.

Your answers should be assessed fairly and critically. Marks should be awarded for **facts** included in your answer to a Question/Exercise, for presentation and for neatness. It is **not**, of course, to be expected that your answers will be identical to all those in the Appendix. However, your answers should contain the **same facts**, although they might be given in a different order or sequence - and any examples you give should be as appropriate to the Questions/Exercises as those given in the relevant "Recommended" Answers.

Add together the marks awarded for all your answers to the Questions/Exercises in a Self-Assessment Test, and enter the total (out of 100) in the "Award" column in the **Progress Chart** in the middle of the full '**Study & Training Guide**' when you receive it. Also enter in the "Matters Requiring Further Study" column the number(s) of any Question(s)/Exercise(s) for which you did not achieve high marks.

GRADES

Here is a guide to the grade your Self-Assessment Test Work has achieved, based on the number of marks awarded for it:

| | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 50% to 59% | PASS | 60% to 64% | HIGH PASS |
| 65% to 74% | MERIT | 75% to 84% | HIGH MERIT |
| 85% to 94% | DISTINCTION | 95% to 100% | HIGH DISTINCTION |

STEP 6

Study again **thoroughly** the section(s) of the Module relating to the Question(s)/Exercise(s) to which your answers did not merit high marks. It is important that you understand where or why you went wrong, so that you will not make the same mistake(s) again.

STEP 7

When you receive the complete Study or Training Manual One** from the College by airmail post, '**revise**' - study again - Module One printed in it, and then turn to **Module Two** and proceed to **study it thoroughly** in exactly the same way as explained in Steps 1, 2 and 3 in this '**Study Guide**'.

When you have completed your **thorough study**, follow steps 4, 5 and 6 for the **Self-Assessment Test on Module 2**.

Continue in the **same way with each of Modules 3, 4, 5 and 6** until you have attempted and assessed your work to Self-Assessment Test 6, and have completed the study of Study or Training Manual One. But - and this is **important** - study the Modules **one by one**; complete Steps 1 to 6 on **each** Module **before** you proceed to the next one (unless during the course of your reading you are referred to another Module).

****Note:** When you receive Study or Training Manual One by airmail post, it will be accompanied by a 20-page '**Study & Training Guide**' (containing a '**Progress Chart**') which you **MUST read very carefully** before starting your study of Module Two.

TRAINING MANUAL ON

COMMUNICATION IN

BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

Module One

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THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD COMMUNICATION

Introduction : The Meaning of 'Communication'

Effective and rapid communication is a vital "tool" in business and in modern management. In this context, we shall define "communication" as being:

"The passing or conveying of a message or an idea from one party to another in such a fashion that both parties perceive its identical meaning."

In other words, not only must information or instructions - or even ideas - be passed from one "party" (a person or group of people) to another "party", but the "receiving party" (the receiver or receivers) **must** understand **exactly** what the "transmitting party" (the sender) intended to be understood. It is a lack of clear understanding on the part of one or other of the "parties" which can give rise to errors, disagreements and disputes - so many of which could be **avoided** with a little care and forethought.

It must not be thought that communication only involves "giving instructions"; far from it! Even within the same workgroup, it is essential that '**information**' - which might include facts, reports, ideas and suggestions, advice and guidance, as well as instructions - is **passed** from one person to another person. And not only does information need to be passed from a manager **to** his or her subordinates, but that manager (and his or her own superiors) needs to receive information **from** his or her subordinates. And the information passed in either "direction" must be clearly understood and correctly "interpreted", with clear explanations being given where necessary.

Without communication, **nothing** could happen within an enterprise: no information or instructions could be given or received, there could be no contact between members of management or between them and subordinates, and no contact with customers or suppliers. The effectiveness of the five functions of management, which are: planning, organising, co-ordinating, motivating and controlling, depends on effective communication. Management **must** be able to make itself understood clearly throughout the enterprise if all areas of it are to function efficiently.

However, it is important for you to clearly understand that to be effective, communication must be **two-way**: not just from management to subordinates, but also from subordinates "up" through the management structure.

Effective communication is just as important **within** an enterprise - which is called '**internal communication**' - as it is between the enterprise and '**external**' contacts: e.g. existing and potential clients/ customers, suppliers, professional people, etc, and which is called '**external communication**'. In this Module, we shall first examine the benefits gained from the establishment and efficient utilisation of **good** two-way communication within an enterprise itself. We shall then go on to look at external communication.

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The Affects of Modern Technology

Increasingly rapid technological advancements have had - and will continue to have - a **major impact** on the transmission of communications: in the areas of speed, reduced cost, ease of use, and the wide availability of “user friendly” equipment. Mobile telephones or cellphones, fax (facsimile), text messaging, picture messaging, email and, of course, the Internet, have revolutionised the transmission of communications, and made it relatively easy to send and to receive messages rapidly over both short and long distances - for both internal and external communication - and at relatively low cost.

The enormous benefits brought about by the application of modern technology to communications are many and varied. But there has been a major “downside”, too.

This can be seen particularly in the “debasement” of the language - especially English - which is used in many messages. Words are often shortened or letters are omitted from them - such as “ur” for “your” - and the correct spellings of words are unknown or guessed at or are ignored. Incorrect grammar is increasingly used. And too often punctuation: such as capital letters, full stops and commas, is omitted.

To a great extent the foregoing result from the sometimes unreasonable urge people have to send - and to receive - messages ever more quickly. Then, too, the wider availability of modern communications equipment often means that messages are sent by people whose knowledge of the language they are using is not as good as it could be (or they think it is).

The net result is that the recipients of many transmitted messages do **not** clearly understand the messages which they receive, or misunderstand or misinterpret the contents of those messages. That is contrary to the definition of communication which we gave earlier:

“The passing or conveying of a message or an idea from one party to another in such a fashion that both parties perceive its identical meaning.”

The shortcomings in language we have described might not, perhaps, be too serious in “personal” communications - such as those between friends or relations. But in business and management **clarity of communications is absolutely essential**. The recipients of messages must **understand exactly** what information the senders of those messages **intended to convey**. In business and management a **misunderstood** message or one which is **misinterpreted** can have **very serious** - and perhaps **costly - consequences** (results). To take just two examples:-

- ★ If an order for goods placed with a supplier or received from a customer is misunderstood, too much or too little might be supplied, or the supply might be made too early or too late - or might not be made at all! In consequence, the operations of the business itself or those of one of its customers might be seriously hampered, delays and loss of sales might ensue, and so on.
- ★ If a subordinate misunderstands or misinterprets his senior’s instructions, he might perform the wrong work, or perform it in the wrong manner; which might result in loss of production or loss of sales, and might even - if, say, machinery or equipment is used incorrectly - cause an accident and injury.

Therefore, we emphasise now - and will do so again and again during the course of this Program - that:

- ◆ it is **far better** to take a little longer to produce and to transmit a well-presented message which will be clearly understood by its recipient(s),

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- ✦ than it is to transmit a poorly produced and/or presented message, which will not be read, or which will be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

In business and management it can often be more dangerous to transmit a message which might be misunderstood or misinterpreted, than it might be not to send the message at all!

So from the outset of studying this Program, do take care to learn thoroughly all that we teach you about **clarity** in communications, about the need for the **attractive presentation** of communications, about **improving your writing style** and **increasing your vocabulary**, and many other topics related to **effective communications**. Never be tempted to “cut corners” to save a little time or effort in producing communications. A misunderstood or misinterpreted communication in business or management could cause you far more trouble, time and/or effort than the little you might have saved in the first place!

Technology is likely to continue to advance at an often alarmingly rapid pace, and communication methods and equipment which appears to be “modern” today can quickly become obsolete, and have to be replaced - often involving considerable expense. All managers must attempt to keep abreast of developments; which is no easy task!

However, it must be recognised that not all new technology can be or needs to be immediately “embraced”, and many enterprises continue to operate efficiently using essentially “tried and tested” methods of communication, and introducing “new” technology as and when finances permit. And the pace of change is greater in some countries or areas of countries than it is in other countries or areas, which is another factor to consider in communications. There is no value in transmitting a message by the most modern method, if the intended recipient cannot receive it, because older equipment is still be used; similarly, enterprises using older equipment might find intended recipients can no longer receive their communications!

The Importance of Effective Internal Communication

The terms “*management*” or “*the management*” are commonly used to refer to a group or “team” of people who hold senior - or executive or managerial - positions in an enterprise. Note, however, that the **activity** of ‘*management*’ refers to that aspect of the work of such people which is concerned primarily with **managing** the efforts of the employees - the personnel or the workforce - of an enterprise.

Let us consider the important ways in which effective communication within an enterprise can assist the members of its management team in the performance of their activity of managing:-

- ✦ With effective communication, every member of management and every other employee will receive precise and accurate information, to ensure that every person working for the enterprise knows exactly what he or she is expected to do, when and where; for what and for whom, and to whom, they are responsible, etc. Misunderstandings and misinterpretations - which can result in wastage of time, effort, labour or money and/or loss of profit - can therefore be greatly reduced or even eliminated.
- ✦ No enterprise exists in a “vacuum”; changes in trading conditions, in the economy, in law and attitudes, and in fashions and consumer demand, as well as technological developments, occur continuously. For an enterprise to prosper - and indeed to survive - its management must not only be able to react quickly in the right way to changes, but must also be able to pass clear instructions quickly to all the personnel concerned. Instructions and information must get quickly from management to supervisors and from supervisors to their subordinates, so that changes and new methods can be implemented without delay, particularly if new or existing employees need training or retraining.

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* Effective two-way communication will help to promote good understanding between management and other personnel, and that in turn can help to reduce disputes; too often disputes have their foundations in simple misunderstandings which could so easily have been avoided. Effective communication should not concentrate solely on passing instructions “down the line” and on receiving reports at higher levels; it should also be concerned with a two-way flow of **information**. The modern workforce (both managerial and nonmanagerial) is no longer content to blindly accept “edicts” from above; personnel want - and need - to know how decisions taken and instructions given may affect their livelihoods and job security.

Dangers of the ‘Grape Vine’

Readily available and **accurate** information about the enterprise, its prospects and achievements and any challenges or problems it faces, generates a healthy interest in the enterprise amongst its personnel - which is in itself a form of motivation. We emphasise the words “*readily available*” and “*accurate*” in the last sentence because the withholding of “official” information or the provision of distorted or inaccurate information can:-

- ★ create a distrust of management, its motives and intentions;
and
- ★ create a reliance on rumours and gossip - both of which can result in strikes and other forms of harmful “industrial action”.

Information which is conveyed by what is called the ‘**grape vine**’ can be very dangerous, and can cause damage to an enterprise and to management/employee relations. When employees are “starved” of accurate information they can react to the wildest rumours and speculations, however inaccurate, exaggerated or distorted those might be. Rumours and the like can start from part of a conversation being overheard or from a chance remark, from the tone of a voice used, or from an imagined attitude of a senior, from amateur “detective work”, and even from the deliberate intent of malcontents to cause unrest, grievances and disputes.

The grape vine can only be truly effective in enterprises in which employees are **not** kept fully informed of management’s intentions and decisions. Thus, the best way to counter its potentially harmful effects is to provide employees with full and accurate information. Good ‘**lines of communication**’ are more likely to create trust in the management of an enterprise, and rumours and gossip are less likely to be believed.

Vertical Communication

As we stated earlier, ‘**vertical** - up and down - **communication**’ must operate in **both** directions: “upwards” as well as “downwards”. It is important for employees to be able to make known quickly to those of their seniors concerned any complaints or grievances they might have - and, of course, to have faith that attention will be paid to them and that action will quickly be taken. In this way minor grievances will **not** grow into major ones because of resentment about management’s apparent lack of interest.

There is usually personal contact at the lower end of the “communication network” - that is, between junior managers, supervisors, foremen and their subordinates in the various workgroups - and therefore with goodwill and understanding from both sides many minor grievances should be quickly resolved. However, should circumstances require it, managers, foremen and supervisors must **not** show reluctance to communicate problems “up” to those of their seniors who have the authority to make decisions and to take the action necessary in the circumstances. Naturally, discussion and consultation might be necessary, which themselves must be **two-way exchanges** of information and views.

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It is also important for employees to be able to receive advice or assistance quickly from, say, the HR/personnel department, as that creates a more content and secure workforce.

Lines of Communications

To enable the most senior - or “top” - management to co-ordinate the activities of the entire enterprise and to react quickly to circumstances and changes which arise, what are called ‘**lines of communication**’ must be established - and operated efficiently. Such actions will ensure that not only are regular and accurate reports, statistics, etc, received, but that information on matters requiring immediate attention will be received without delay. That, in turn, will enable decisions to be reached quickly and any necessary changes to plans, work schedules, etc, to be implemented as early as possible.

Another very sound reason for establishing good lines of communication “upwards” is that they encourage a flow of ideas and suggestions, on a wide range of matters which might be beneficial to the enterprise, “up” to those who are able to discuss and consider them, and make decisions concerning them. After all, it is those who are in intimate, day to day contact with the operational activities of an enterprise who are more likely to be able to make suggestions on better methods of working, time saving, cost reductions, the elimination of duplicated effort or waste, etc, than top management, which is more remote from “detail”.

It is not sufficient merely to establish lines of communication; they must be **examined** from time to time to ensure:-

- ★ That they are being used as planned.
and
- ★ That they are still adequate; circumstances and personnel change, and so the lines of communication might have to be modified. Outmoded lines of communication can quickly lead to ineffective communication: to delays, to misunderstandings, or simply result in action not being taken. Top management must be involved, particularly as its style and approach influence the whole network.

If management’s approach is “authoritarian” (requiring obedience without question) then there could be a reluctance to accept communications coming “down” - and instructions might be only grudgingly complied with - whilst there will be little incentive to communicate “upwards” apart from the reports, etc, called for. Similarly, if top management is reluctant to provide information, many employees (managerial as well as nonmanagerial) might see no reason to provide information upwards unless it is specifically requested.

Managers, supervisors and foremen need to be ‘**approachable**’, and not “distant” or aloof from their subordinates. If, for instance, a manager’s manner is unfriendly, or if he is rude or abusive, or bad tempered, impatient, remote or aloof, subordinates will be reluctant to approach him for any help or advice they might need, or to pass on important information which might affect efficiency. As a result of the lack of communication, he might not be told about problems which arise, and so therefore cannot take steps to solve; and so delays, holdups or interruptions might occur, which could reduce the output of his workgroup, section or department, and perhaps even of the whole enterprise.

Consider for example a manager in charge of stocks of components used in the manufacture of products in a factory. A subordinate notices that quantities of an important item appear to be being issued faster than is usual or expected, and so stock of it is running low. He suspects the reason might be theft or pilfering, but he is too nervous to inform his superior, who has abused him in the past, and who might blame him now for the loss of stock. So he says nothing to the manager; in other words there is no communication. As a result, stock of the component “runs out”, and the work of

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the factory comes to a halt. Management will, quite rightly, be furious at the loss of production, and it will be the stores manager who will be held to be at fault, as well as for not investigating the possibility of stock being pilfered or stolen.

In such circumstances the stores manager has only himself to blame! Had he been “approachable”, had he encouraged his subordinates to communicate with - to report to - him, without fear of harsh words, blame or abuse, the situation would have been known in time. And then action could have been taken in time - to prevent losses and/or to reorder new stock, in this case - to **avoid** the problem arising.

Feedback

Whenever possible, a system of ‘**feedback**’ should be built into the communication network so that the senders of communications can check that they **are** being received, understood and acted upon. There are, unfortunately, some managers on whose desks communications stop - information neither being passed upwards nor downwards, as the circumstances might require; such lack of understanding on the part of those managers gives rise to resentment and can cause many problems. It is important that all managers, supervisors and foremen strictly **avoid** such damaging situations arising.

Horizontal Communication

In addition to vertical communication, there must also be ‘**horizontal** - sideways or lateral - **communication**’ within an enterprise. By this we mean a flow of **information** between personnel of about equivalent status in different departments, for example between the sales manager and the production manager or the purchasing manager.

Horizontal communication can only be effective if there is **co-operation** between the various departments and their senior executives (whose attitudes are likely to affect the attitudes of all their subordinates.) Top management must encourage a spirit of **co-operation** and **co-ordination** to avoid loss of efficiency in the organization as a whole.

Despite the common interest of departments in achieving the common goal, difficulties can often arise about which top management might be unaware. Personalities and personal relationships can bedevil horizontal communication. For example, if there are personality clashes, jealousies, or other causes of friction between departmental (or even section) managers, co-operation might be minimal and there might be a reluctance, or worse, to pass on information.

What is called “*empire building*” - the attempt by a departmental manager to increase his or her department’s (and, in consequence, his or her own) importance or influence - can also be a problem, as there might be reluctance to pass on information which might “help” another department.

Again, top management must be on the alert for any such problems which might reduce efficiency - and must quickly take steps to resolve them.

Horizontal Communication and Information

Horizontal communication is concerned with the **flow of information** and NOT with the flow of instructions or authority.

For example, a salesman could perhaps “request” an accounts clerk (or a more senior member of the accounts department) for a check on a customer’s creditworthiness. But he would have NO

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authority to instruct the clerk or other personnel to make the check or to demand that it be made. It would be most tactless for the manager of one department to communicate directly with a subordinate in another department without the knowledge and consent of that subordinate's departmental head. And it could cause trouble if there was an attempt by a manager to give instructions to personnel of another department.

Where areas of responsibility and authority are clear to all, such infractions should not occur, but it is another matter to which top management must pay attention if small slights or usurpations of authority are not to sour relations between departments and reduce co-operation.

Summary

Effective communication within an enterprise brings with it these important benefits:-

- * Misunderstandings between members of management and management/employees are reduced or eliminated; misinterpretation of instructions is minimised.
- * The establishment and the maintenance of good understanding between management and employees can avoid misunderstandings, as well as a hasty reaction to rumours and speculations and gossip which could lead to resentment and disputes.
- * Personnel kept fully aware of the activities and affairs of an enterprise are likely to become more interested in the enterprise and its success.
- * If personnel are able to make known quickly to management any complaints they might have, the chances of minor irritations "growing" into major complaints, and possibly leading to serious disputes through management's apparent lack of interest, are greatly reduced.
- * Personnel who can obtain solutions to their complaints or grievances and the necessary advice and assistance quickly are likely to feel more secure and satisfied.
- * Employees who know that management welcomes information, might be willing and able to assist the enterprise by passing to management new ideas, suggestions for improving output, etc.
- * Instructions can be passed quickly from management to supervisors and foremen, and then quickly from them to their own subordinates.
- * Information can move smoothly from top management to lower levels, and vice versa, and between departments and sections.
- * The training of new and existing personnel can be more quickly undertaken when necessary.
- * Regular and accurate reports from all areas are received by management, which will enable:
 - ✦ control and co-ordination to be exercised;
 - ✦ decisions based on up to date information to be reached quickly;
 - ✦ any changes necessary to be implemented without costly delays.

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The Importance of Effective External Communication

Without external communication, an enterprise would be isolated from its potential and existing clients/customers and its suppliers. Effective and efficient two-way external communication is important:-

- ★ In maintaining good public relations.
- ★ In ensuring that customers or clients are satisfied with the standard of the goods or services provided.
- ★ In ascertaining that what is being produced or provided is what customers or clients want.
- ★ In ensuring that any consumer complaints are speedily and satisfactorily dealt with.
- ★ In ensuring that consumers are kept apprised of new and/or improved products or services (advertising and publicity) available.

In short, we can say that external communication is in large part concerned with keeping an enterprise's customers and prospective customers and other "stakeholders" happy, whilst endeavouring to enlarge its share of the "market" for the products with which it deals.

Good, regular communication with suppliers is also essential to ensure the continuous availability of all necessary items and services. It is not simply a matter of placing orders, but of ensuring receipt of requirements at the right times and places on the most advantageous terms; up to date information is necessary on changes in prices, discounts offered, credit terms allowed, promotional campaigns, etc. In addition, contact must be maintained with possible alternative suppliers and their terms need to be known.

Up to date information is also necessary about activities by competitors, new technological developments, buying trends and consumer demand, changes in fashions, etc. Without up to date information, forward planning and forecasting cannot be undertaken with any degree of accuracy.

Contact will need to be maintained with "service providers", such as banks and other financial institutions, insurers, accounting and auditing firms, lawyers, electricity, gas, water, and telecommunications organizations.

Communication might also have to be maintained with such diverse bodies as training establishments, trade associations, government departments, employees' representatives (e.g. trade unions and/or staff associations) and with a wide range of other people and/or organizations.

And in the case of a limited company, regular contact will need to be maintained with its shareholders and other stakeholders.

Clearly the efficient and regular flow of information **into** an enterprise is as important as the efficient flow of information **out** of it.

The Principles of Effective Communication

We first set down the basic principles for your ease of understanding, and we then consider each in detail. (For convenience we use the word "sender" to refer to the originator of the source of a communication; however, the word should also be read as including a person speaking - **oral**

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communication.)

1. In addition to a sender there must also be a receiver or receivers, as the case may be, and both must be clearly **identified**.
2. There must be an adequate **method** (or channel) of transmitting (passing) the communication, and should there be more than one channel available, the sender must select the most appropriate in the circumstances.
3. The sender must be sure that the language used in the communication is within the **understanding** of the intended receiver(s), and also that the same interpretation will be put on the language at the receiving end as was intended by the sender.
4. The sender must ensure that there is provision for **feedback**.
5. The sender must be prepared to become a **receiver** as soon as there is a response (the feedback) to the communication.
6. Barriers or obstructions to or interferences with the smooth or clear flow of communications must be reduced or eliminated.

The foregoing principles should be used not only in establishing channels of communication, but also to compare with existing methods of communication as improvements can frequently be made if one or more has been overlooked. We now look at each again, in the same order.

Identifying the Sender and the Intended Receiver(s)

There is no point in sending a communication if there is no-one to receive it or if nobody knows who it is for or who it is from. Perhaps you have heard a telephone (or intercom) conversation something like this:

“Is Mister Silas in? No? Then ask him to ring me when he gets back, please.”

End of communication. The sender (the speaker in this case) assumes that the receiver of the message knows - from his voice, presumably - who he is. But does the receiver really know?” He or she might be newly engaged or be a junior or even a temporary secretary, so Mister Silas - if the receiver bothers to pass such a pointless message on to him - will not know who to ‘phone back and will probably be annoyed, and worried in case somebody needs him urgently. All the sender needed to have done was to state his name (plus his telephone or extension number) instead of saying “me”, and there would have been no problem.

A common and often **serious fault** in emails - including many sent in the course of business or management - is the lack of the sender’s name, or the name of the organization on whose behalf the sender has written. Too often the sender’s postal address, or that of the organization on whose behalf the email was sent, is omitted. That is a **serious fault** when the reply required might not be possible by email or by email alone, for example if a printed catalogue or a sample of goods needs to be sent as part of the “reply”. It is very **unprofessional** in business and management to omit the name and address (except, perhaps, in the case of an internal ‘**memo**’ (see Module 8) of the sender of a message, and to do so can result not only in a lack of “feedback”, but also in a loss of customers and sales.

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If a communication is intended for more than one person, that fact must be clearly stated. Equally, if the communication is to be kept “confidential” by the receiver, that fact must be specified.

You will find that some enterprises do use recording devices on their telephones and/or intercoms, so that messages arriving outside working hours or whilst an office is empty, can be recorded, and responded to at a later time; fax (facsimile) machines can also be left switched on to record incoming messages 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Incoming email messages can also be “stored” to be opened and read when appropriate.

Selecting the Best Method or Channel to be Used

Obviously there must be a method - or a “channel” - of transmitting the communication to the intended receiver(s). What that method needs to be depends on the nature of the communication, its urgency, where the sender and receiver are located, and so on.

There are a variety of channels of communication, although not all may be available to a particular sender. The most common are:-

- ★ orally - the spoken word in face-to-face conversations, by telephone or by intercom, or by recorded tape;
- ★ written, typed, word-processed or printed communications, e.g. in letters, memos, reports, completed forms, etc;
- ★ transmission by mechanical or electronic means, and visual methods.

We look at some of the various channels in later Modules; but here we are concerned with selecting the **appropriate** or most suitable channel, if there is more than one available. For example, simple, routine instructions can be given to a subordinate orally; but important or new instructions are best put in writing for future reference and to avoid any subsequent dispute.

Similarly, it might be quicker, cheaper or more convenient to send a message over a long distance by fax or by email, rather than by telephone. The first two methods have the advantage of providing a record of the communication, whilst a telephone conversation might not be recorded and so can be forgotten or misunderstood or misheard (e.g. over a “bad” line).

Communications containing **figures** or **amounts** or **technical terms** or **formulae** should be set down in writing or, if given orally initially, should be “backed up” by written confirmation for future reference and the avoidance of later disputes. The use of oral communications which have to be passed on to others - also orally - can be dangerous, as messages passed on by “word of mouth” are frequently distorted or unconsciously altered at each repeating; it is safer to put such communications in writing for all concerned to read.

Ensuring the Correct Interpretation by Receivers

The problem of sending communications from one country to another country or countries, in which different languages might be used, is obvious. Here we are concerned with matters rather closer to hand. In the modern world of commerce, employees often move from country to country and move even more frequently from area to area in the same country.

Therefore, even managers and supervisors and their subordinates working closely together within the same department, section or workgroup, might have different national languages, or might speak

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different dialects of the same language. Due allowance **must** always be made for any such differences, and communications must be framed in clear, easy to understand language - and tactfully, so that the receiver does not take offence at being “talked down to”.

Some words or phrases (in the same language) might have different meanings in different countries or parts of countries. For example, some people use “*just now*” as meaning a short time ago (in the past); whilst other people use it as meaning a short time ahead (in the future); thus:

“I did it just now”

has a very different meaning from:

“I’ll do it just now”

But said quickly, the correct meaning might easily be misinterpreted.

Some managers and supervisors forget that some of their subordinates might not have had the benefit of an education equivalent to their own, and so therefore might not be able to grasp new concepts, innovations or changes as quickly as they themselves can. This is a **wrong** attitude, and allowances for differences in education, training, experience, and so on, **must** be made.

Even the use, or omission, of a punctuation mark can drastically alter the meaning of a communication. Compare the two instructions which follow:-

1. DEPART IMMEDIATELY ARRANGEMENTS FINALISED
2. DEPART IMMEDIATELY. ARRANGEMENTS FINALISED

Communication 1 means:

“Depart at once as soon as (or immediately **after**) the arrangements have been finalised”, that is, the arrangements are **not yet** finalised.

Communication 2, however, means something quite different, that is:

“Depart at once because arrangements **have already** been finalised”.

If the sender omitted to include the full-stop (or “point”) in communication 2 (and we mentioned earlier in this Module that too often punctuation marks are omitted from messages) or included it in communication 1 by mistake, an entirely wrong message would be received.

Another problem of understanding can arise in communications between operational departments and specialist departments, even within the same enterprise, as the latter tend to use technical terms in a familiar way or to build up their own “jargon”, which might not be clearly understood by the non-specialists. A classic example is of the IT department informing the sales department that the previous year’s sales figures have been “dumped”. The sales manager immediately erupts, imagining that the figures have been destroyed, whereas in computer jargon “dumped” merely means that records have been removed from current data storage and stored in a different place!

In Module 4 we consider the problems which can be posed by the use of technical words and terms and computer terminology.

The Importance of Feedback

As we have already explained, a provision for feedback is essential to enable the sender to check that the communication **was** received and understood and that, if required, it **was** acted upon. A lack of response or reaction to the communication, should act as an “*alarm bell*” to the sender, and will provide the opportunity for the sender to find out why, and if necessary give the chance to take appropriate action in the circumstances. In other words, the **lack** of “feedback” is a warning that something might be wrong.

Frequently a communication is only part of a “chain”, and the response to it will set off other reactions. For example, an “order” for goods is placed with a supplier; on receipt of confirmation and an indication of the delivery date, preparations can be made to receive, store, utilise in production or sell the supplies. However, if no confirmation is asked for, the sender of the order will not know when, if ever, the supplies will arrive; it will not even be known whether the order was received or understood by the supplier!

It is therefore clear that “breaks” in communication can go undetected unless there is a feedback mechanism.

Changing Roles: Sender-Receiver-Sender

This follows quite logically from the last principle; if the **sender** expects a response to his (or her) communication, he must be prepared to “reverse” his role and be the **receiver** of the response and, if necessary, revert to being a **sender** again. In the course of an oral conversation, this change of role from speaker (sender) to listener (receiver) and back again is obvious and automatic.

However, there is no value in a manager instructing a subordinate to:

“Phone me back at once with the information.”

and then leaving the office for the day without making any arrangements for the information to reach him.

As much attention must be paid to the response or reply as to the original communication, and action must be taken as necessary on receipt of the response. To return to the example of the order for goods used earlier: if the response is that the order cannot be “filled”, immediate action must be taken to have it filled by another, alternative supplier. A danger lies in being complacent about the likely response to a communication, that is, in deciding in advance what the response will be, and then leaving it to be handled by a subordinate, or ignoring it. The response - the “return” communication - might be **quite different** from what was expected!

Eliminating Causes of Breakdown or Interruptions or Obstructions

There might be many causes of a breakdown in one or more channels of communication, some of which might be beyond the control of management, such as power failures, postal strikes, or poor telephone services. Other interferences occur due to faults in equipment (the intercom, fax machines, word processors, and similar machines and computers); shortages of trained staff, e.g. telephone switchboard or computer operators, stenographers, etc; shortages of equipment, e.g. insufficient fax machines, or congestion, e.g. “queues” of fax or email messages waiting to be transmitted.

Some of the obstructions could be prevented by forethought: by making sure that a relief switchboard operator is trained, for instance, or by ensuring adequate maintenance of equipment.

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Noise is a prime cause of interference and distraction in communication, resulting in face-to-face, telephone and intercom conversations being misheard and/or misunderstood. Unnecessary talking - particularly chatting about "personal" matters - should be discouraged. Steps should be taken to locate noisy machinery - such as some printers - away from areas where communication requires concentration.

It is as important for a manager or supervisor to ensure subordinates can conduct uninterrupted, effective communication as it is for him to be able to do so himself or herself.

Oral Communication

Oral - spoken - communication is the most frequently used of all methods of communication for most business people, managers, supervisors and foremen. But in spite of - and because of - this familiarity, great care must be taken in using this method. Speech is the most **expressive** form of communication; the merest change in the **tone of voice** or **inflexion** (modulation of the voice - the rise and fall in its pitch) or emphasis on one or more words, can alter the "message" received by the listener.

Consider the sentence:

"I would like you to do this work today."

By emphasising (stressing) different words, we can subtly change the meaning of the sentence:-

- ★ By emphasising the word "I", the speaker infers that he, rather than anybody else, wants the listener to do the work today.
- ★ By emphasising the word "you", the speaker stresses that it is the listener who must do the work, and not anybody else.
- ★ By emphasising the words "this work", the speaker makes it clear that he is referring to specific work and not to any other.
- ★ By emphasising the word "today", the speaker makes it clear that tomorrow is not good enough.

The addition of the word "*please*" at the end of the sentence in the normal way would indicate politeness, but if that word was to be stressed, it could denote insistence by the speaker.

Consider stress, tone and inflexion in saying:

"Thank you very much."

If the last two words are stressed, the tone and inflexion of voice used could imply particularly great thanks, **or** sarcasm (i.e. thank you - but about time!), **or** resignation **or** that thanks are really not being given (i.e. thanks for nothing).

The thoughtless use or misuse or omission of words can cause unintentional offence: a secretary or another subordinate who does not receive a "thank you" for performing some task - or who receives a curt "thanks" instead - is entitled to feel hurt and might, perhaps, be less willing to be helpful in future.

"Danger times" are particularly when the speaker is especially busy or under pressure or is worried, or even, perhaps, has had a bad night's sleep. A subordinate (or for that matter a colleague, superior, customer, client or supplier) can very easily be upset by receiving an irritable or snappish reply to a

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question, or by being answered in a harsh or overbearing tone of voice. Similarly, annoyance can be caused by a too hasty, offhanded reply or by a momentary lapse of politeness expressed in the tone of voice used.

However, with thought and care, spoken communication - because of its expressiveness - has many advantages:-

- * The “presentation” can be adapted to suit the listener; for example, perhaps more easily understood words can be selected and spoken; if necessary words can be pronounced more clearly or spoken more slowly - depending on the listener(s).
- * Words can be stressed and different tones of voice can be used to produce subtle “shades” of meaning or to provide hints of the speaker’s feelings or attitude or emotions. The tone of voice used can be friendly, persuasive, urgent, insistent, etc, as the particular circumstances require.
- * Although speech should be clear and precise and pronunciation accurate, the speaker does not have to worry about the placing of punctuation marks or spelling, paragraphing, etc.
- * In general, oral communication allows for an immediate response - a reply, or action (feedback) and, if necessary, the opportunity to repeat what was said without delay. Of course, the listener must be given or allowed the opportunity to reply!

‘Unspoken’ Communication and ‘Body Language’

It must not be overlooked that some face-to-face communications might not be oral, or just oral alone.

Thoughts and feelings can often be conveyed - both consciously and unconsciously: by facial expressions such as smiles, yawns, grins, grimaces, frowns, sneers, raised eyebrows, etc - and by gestures of a variety of kinds: such finger wagging, shrug of the shoulders, and so on. Even the movement of the eyes can convey an impression, for instance looking at a speaker implies interest, whilst looking away from him might imply disinterest, and give offence.

All these “unspoken” forms of communication - which are sometimes referred to as “body language” - can emphasise or contribute to what is actually being spoken, or even in some cases can replace speech; and a wrong facial expression, gesture or movement or at the wrong time can cause offence or annoyance.

Recording Oral Communications

A disadvantage of oral communication is that there is generally no record of what was said during “informal” conversations. Therefore, where there is any possibility of disagreement or uncertainty at a later date about what might - or might not - have been said, it is best for notes to be made, and for **written confirmation** (by letter, memo, order, or some other written document) to be made. Some telephones and intercoms do contain provision for recordings to be made, but mainly at senior management level. In addition, it is customary for notes or recordings to be made of “formal” meetings (e.g. board meetings).

Communication by Telephone and Intercom

Oral communication by telephone is vital for most enterprises, and is just as important by the internal communication system (intercom) within any but very small enterprises.

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Most people will, of course, be familiar with the use of telephones, although the use of the increasing number of gadgets and attachments to them and to intercoms might call for some explanation and/or training, as systems used differ from enterprise to enterprise. Each “generation” of mobile telephones or cell phones offers a wider range of often sophisticated services and facilities, but research shows that a high percentage of users make use of less than 10% of the services on offer; many people do not even use text messaging facilities.

Two factors to consider in planning telephone and intercom networks are:-

- ★ Firstly, who may communicate with whom should be established, and for what purposes or in what circumstances (this is particularly important in horizontal communication, as already explained.)
- ★ Secondly, it must be decided who really **needs** to have a telephone or an intercom set (or a combination of both) on his or her desk or nearby to it. Consideration must be given to the fact that some people regard having telephones and/or intercom sets on their desks as “status symbols”, even if they do not really need one or both.

Misuses of telephones and intercoms, for “personal” calls, chats, etc, can be a problem - they can be a distraction to others in the vicinity, as well as tying up the communication network, if not kept in check - which needs to be done in a reasonable, understanding way.

A manager should ensure that subordinates follow the principles of effective communication in making use of telephones and the intercom, for instance:-

- * Making sure that the party at the other end **does** understand what is said, by repeating the message (especially if figures, amounts, prices, sizes or descriptions - particularly technical ones - are involved).
- * Making notes of some conversations for future reference, and if necessary sending written follow-ups or confirmations.
- * Using “internal” or “external” telephone indexes/storage and the like which can save much time, work and frustration in recalling telephone numbers, in redialing often used numbers, etc.

Email via networked personal computers - commonly referred to as PCs - is increasingly a major channel for communication within enterprises (as well as with external contacts). We discuss the use of emails for communications later, but it is worth mentioning here that the “unauthorised” use of an enterprise’s email facilities - and/or Internet connection - for “personal” messages, etc, can be as great a problem as time-wasting on “personal” telephone and intercom conversations, as well as causing delays in the enterprise’s own incoming and outgoing communications.

Circumstances in which Oral Communication might be used

During the course of his or her daily duties a manager is likely to have to speak to subordinates on numerous occasions, to discuss matters with them, to give them instructions, and even to give them training.

In many cases he (or she) will speak to them face-to-face as it were; in other cases he might speak to them via the intercom, and there might be occasions when he will speak to them by telephone. There are many different intercom systems: some make use of the telephone network within the organization’s premises, others are independent of the telephone system, others make use of computers. It is possible sometimes for telephone and/or intercom conversations to be recorded, if necessary (usually onto a small cassette), so that there is a record of the conversations for future reference.

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A manager is also likely to have meetings - either "formal" ones, which proceed according to fixed programmes (called "agendas"), or informal ones at which topics might be wide-ranging - and discussions, either in his own office or in the offices of others, with colleagues of the same or similar status, with seniors, and with customers/clients or suppliers. If records of the conversations are required, use can be made of sound recorders, or notes can be made by "stenographers" (shorthand/typists).

Depending on his (or her) position within an enterprise, a manager might have to meet customers/clients and/or suppliers at their offices, or perhaps at restaurants or hotels, for discussions. He might have to travel to other towns or countries to meet and to hold personal discussions with potential or existing clients, etc (and even greater care has to be taken when dealing with people who speak different languages). Even if he does not actually meet customers/clients and suppliers, he might well have to speak to them frequently by telephone.

Other occasions on which a manager, depending on his (or her) position within an enterprise, may have to communicate orally include:-

- * When interviewing candidates for employment (see Module 5) and/or for promotion; such occasions should be two-way exchanges of information, so the manager can ask questions to obtain information about candidates, whilst allowing candidates adequate opportunities to ask questions about the job, the enterprise, etc.
- * When giving induction training for newly recruited or promoted personnel, and possibly when holding courses and lectures for them.
- * During "joint consultation" (see Module 8), which is intended to provide a forum for discussion between management and employees on matters of mutual interest, e.g. changes in company policy, future developments, improved manufacturing methods, ideas for improving productivity, etc. Here again, there should be two-way communication, and the views of both management and the employees should be considered fully and with equal status. All matters discussed and all decisions reached during such joint consultation should be communicated fully and clearly to all personnel.
- * During conferences/conventions and similar group meetings, such as those held for salesmen or representatives, or to introduce new products. Again, in many instances there will be a two-way exchange of views.
- * During exhibitions and demonstrations, shows, etc, which might be visited by prospective and existing customers.
- * Speeches are a common means of communicating information, particularly on policy matters, to employees and to shareholders.
- * In discussions with trade union and/or staff association officials, which yet again should be two-way communication.
- * During "counselling sessions" with subordinates (see Module 8) in which two-way communication is essential.

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Written Communications

Written communication is essential or preferable in very many different instances. We have already mentioned the need for orders for goods and services to be put down "in writing". The same applies equally to estimates, quotations, specifications and for communications containing figures, numbers, formulae, complex or technical data or descriptions, and anything else that can be misunderstood or forgotten if only given orally.

Records - often called '**minutes**' - of formal meetings are usually required, as are advance notices of topics for discussion at them - called '**agendas**'; these matters are dealt with fully in Module 8.

The variety of circumstances in which letters or circulars must be sent to potential and existing customers, clients and suppliers is huge, as are those requiring letters to be written to professional people, government departments, etc. Certain legal and statutory documents are required. Reports are generally required in writing.

Where there is distance between the locations of senders and receivers, written communications, e.g. letters, memos, fax and email messages, might be the only feasible form of communication. And the same might apply to time differences, for example between the day and night shifts, and between different "time zones", which sometimes exist within the same country.

Quite often written communications are in preprinted "forms" or other business documents - and illustrations and descriptions of many common ones are illustrated for you in Module 2. When the same message is to be conveyed to a large number of people - whether they are employees or customers/potential customers or others - printed "circulars" are often used. There is often also need for the design and production of notices and posters, etc.

It is important for the best or most suitable method of written communication to be selected to suit the "message" and the reason(s) why it is being sent:

- ★ Letters must be properly laid out and typed or word processed, checked and signed.
- ★ Memos (short for memoranda, singular memorandum - see Module 8) are usually simpler and more to the point than are letters, and are generally used for written communications within the organization.
- ★ Fax messages - which like telephone calls - are charged by transmission time - may be used for internal communications, and are also used for long distance or urgent messages or to avoid delays in receipt.
- ★ Email may be used for the rapid transmission of internal and/or external messages, over long or short distances.
- ★ Some communications can go on postcards; others must go in envelopes - and there are often different methods of despatch available : first class and second class (or printed matter), surface mail or airmail, registered, recorded delivery, express, etc.

In later Modules we shall teach you about, and how to produce, many different types of written communications. Some are suitable for use only in specific circumstances, but quite often you will have alternative methods available to you, and you will then have to decide the most suitable one to select in the circumstances.

SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST ONE

You will find **Recommended Answers** - against which you may assess and compare your own answers to the Questions in this Test - in the **Appendix** on page 25. The maximum mark which may be awarded for a Question in this Test appears in brackets at the end of that Question. Do **NOT** send your answers to these Questions to the College for assessment.

You may use an English-English dictionary in your working of these Questions.

No.1. Describe briefly the benefits which can be gained from having effective communication within an enterprise. (maximum 30 marks)

No.2. (a) List the principles of effective communication. (maximum 20 marks)

(b) Why is a feedback system necessary with communications? (maximum 10 marks)

No.3. Describe at least six circumstances in which it is essential to use written communication. (maximum 30 marks)

No.4. Place a tick in the box against the **one correct** statement in each set:

(a) *Horizontal communication is concerned with:*

- 1 the flow of instructions from management to subordinates.
- 2 the flow of information from management to subordinates.
- 3 the flow of information between executives of similar status.
- 4 the flow of instructions between executives of similar status.

(b) *In a business context, the "grape vine" is:*

- 1 the provision of refreshments for management and employees.
- 2 the term describing the way in which rumours and disinformation circulate amongst employees.
- 3 a plant grown so the business's premises are attractive to visitors.
- 4 a badly pronounced word which is misunderstood by a subordinate.

(c) *The term "lines of communication" refers to:*

- 1 methods by which messages can be passed from one party to another.
- 2 the wires or cables along which telephone and fax messages travel.
- 3 the written or typed sections from top to bottom of a sheet of paper making up a letter.
- 4 people queuing up to make use of telephones or other equipment.

(d) *Oral communication consists of:*

- 1 signs and gestures used to pass messages from one party to another.
- 2 messages passed vertically from management to subordinates.
- 3 messages passed from one party to another using the spoken word.
- 4 listening to recorded tapes and cassettes.

(e) *For a communication to be effective and to achieve its objectives:*

- 1 it must be transmitted by the fastest method possible.
- 2 it must be stated in the simplest language possible.
- 3 it must be kept as brief as possible.
- 4 it must have exactly the same meaning for both the sender and the receiver.

(2 marks for each correct statement - maximum 10 marks)

RECOMMENDED ANSWERS TO SELF-ASSESSMENT TEST ONE

No.1. The first benefit accruing from effective communication within an enterprise is the reduction of misunderstandings between management and other employees and between members of the management team, which leads to better relations between the management and other personnel of an enterprise.

Employees who are kept fully informed about matters affecting the enterprise and its activities, and about matters which might affect their livelihoods and job security, are less likely to react to possibly distorted and exaggerated gossip, rumours, etc, and might become more interested in the enterprise and its success. Effective communication also enables personnel to have any grievances or complaints notified to management - and dealt with - quickly, and also to receive assistance quickly when required; both factors increase harmony in the workplace, and reduce the likelihood of harmful disputes.

Instructions can be passed quickly, with less chance of misinterpretation. Information can be passed quickly to all those who require it, and management will receive regular, accurate reports to enable control and co-ordination to be exercised, and decisions to be made and action to be taken based on up-to-date data.

No.2. (a) The principles of effective communication are:-

- (1) Both the sender and the intended receiver(s) must be clearly identified.
- (2) The most appropriate channel should be selected and used in transmitting the communication.
- (3) The language used by the sender must be within the understanding of the receiver, and be capable of being interpreted by the latter in the way intended by the sender.
- (4) Provision for feedback must be incorporated.
- (5) The sender must be ready to become a receiver when there is a response to a communication, and if necessary also be ready to revert to being a sender.
- (6) Interferences with, or obstructions to, the clear and/or the smooth flow of communications must be removed.

(b) Unless there is provision for feedback, the sender of a communication will not know whether it was received and/or acted upon. If a feedback facility exists but there is no response to a communication, the sender of it has the opportunity to check whether it was received, understood and, if required, acted upon, and to take any necessary additional action without delay.

No.3. Communications should be in writing whenever there is a chance of misunderstanding or misinterpretation, or a subsequent dispute. This applies in particular to agreements, orders for goods/services, estimates, quotations, valuations, specifications and in communications containing figures, sums of money, amounts, quantities, technical terms or data, or mathematical formulae, complex descriptions, foreign words or phrases, addresses, telephone or fax numbers, and many other similar communications.

(Note: many other circumstances are possible and could have been given by you in answer to this Question).

No.4. The right statement from each of the sets selected and ticked:

- (a) 3✓ (b) 2✓ (c) 1✓ (d) 3✓ (e) 4✓

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN MODULES 2 TO 12 OF THE COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Module 2 - Forms and Business Documents

Forms as “tools” in business
The many and varied uses of forms:
 manual forms
 computerised forms
Factors to consider in designing a form:
 the information really needed
 sizes of spaces or fields
 logical and coherent sequence
 standardisation of layout
 catering for filing
 the presentation
Accuracy in completing forms
Codes or references
Copies of forms
Serial numbering of forms
Indexes of forms
Illustrations and descriptions of
 common business documents, and
 circumstances in which they might be used:
 employment application form
 order form
 invoice
 credit note
 statement of account

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- cheque or check and counterfoil
- pay-in/deposit/lodgement slip and counterfoil
- receipt for payment
- petty cash voucher
- delivery note
- goods received advice
- Series of forms
- Comparison of manual and computerised completion of forms

Module 3 - Business Letters

- Why business letters are written
- How business letters differ from informal/social letters:
 - the letterhead
 - date
 - the addressee's particulars
 - greetings
 - references
 - layout
 - closing expressions
 - the writer's designation
- Specimen business letters examined
- Form-type business letters:
 - form-type "reply" letter

Good English in Business Letters

- Sentences as complete statements
- Subjects and predicates
- Capital letters and full stops
- Paragraphs:
 - separations
 - indentation
- Continuity:
 - logical sequence of sentences and paragraphs
 - planning and drafting letters, research
- Finite verbs
- Compound sentences:
 - using conjunctions
- Nouns:
 - proper nouns
 - singular and plural
 - masculine, feminine, common and neuter
 - possessive
- Pronouns:
 - personal
 - possessive
 - interrogative
 - demonstrative
 - indefinite

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Module 4 - Improving Written Composition and Style

Variety in the use of words:

- vocabulary
- attracting favourable attention
- persuading readers to read on

Adjectives - words which describe or qualify nouns:

- possessive adjectives
- comparison of adjectives
- the articles a, an and the

Context

Cardinal and ordinal numbers

Verbs:

- past, present and future tenses
- simple and continuous conjugations

Adverbs of:

- time
- place
- degree
- manner
- reason
- positioning
- comparison of adverbs

The Confusion of Words

Words with the same pronunciation but different meanings and/or spellings

Words with similar pronunciation but different meanings and spellings
practical examples

Abbreviations

Abbreviations in common use:

- lists with explanations and remarks

When abbreviations should not be used

Abbreviations of:

- countries and regions
- organizations and government departments
- dates and months
- currencies
- weights and measures

Slang and colloquialisms

Technical words and terms, computer terms

Module 5 - Communications Concerning Employment and Promotion

Sources of information regarding job vacancies:

- introductions
- careers offices/advisers
- employment offices/job centres

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- employers' advertisements
- notices
- observation
- advertising for a job
- The first approach:
 - by telephone
 - by application form
 - by letter
- Correct completion of employment application forms:
 - points to watch for
- Job descriptions:
 - what they may contain
 - specimen
- Employee specifications:
 - purpose
 - possible contents
- Attachments to application forms and letters:
 - recommendations, references and testimonials
 - certificates, diplomas, school reports
 - curriculum vitae
- Employment application letters:
 - attracting the favourable attention of readers
 - the paper
 - handwriting
 - typing
 - layout
 - the envelope
- Specimen advertisement for a vacant post
 - and a specimen reply to it analysed
- Advertisement vouchers/box numbers:
 - why they might be used
- Specimen letters applying for employment in a variety
 - of differing circumstances:
 - their contents analysed and discussed
- Letters regarding promotion:
 - what promotion involves
 - specimen letter:
 - its contents analysed
- Communications from employers:
 - specimen letters:
 - inviting an interview
 - declining an interview
 - their contents analysed
- Employment interviews:
 - their aims
 - their importance to both interviewers and candidates
 - preparation and pre-planning for their conduct
 - the interview room and environment
 - conducting interviews:
 - correct treatment of candidates
 - importance of the two-way exchange of information
- Selection tests

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Appointment:
specimen letter of appointment:
its contents analysed
terms and conditions of employment
Dealing with unsuccessful applicants and candidates

Module 6 - Sales Letters and Literature

Objectives of sales letters
Layout of sales letters:
indentation
justification
block style
Appearance contents of sales letters:
letterheads
Contents of sales letters:
the wording
styles of writing
Attracting favourable attention:
persuading readers to read on
First approach letters:
their possible aims:
attracting favourable attention to the product
arousing and maintaining the reader's interest
creating and fostering a desire to buy
convincing the reader of the benefits of the product
persuading the reader to buy
logical sequence of contents
a specimen letter analysed and its
contents discussed
Post scripts:
their uses in general
their uses in sales letters
Follow-up letters:
reasons why they might have to be written and sent
five specimen letters illustrating common reasons:
their contents analysed and discussed
Offering "something extra" in follow-up letters
Circulars:
why they might have to be produced and distributed
two specimens analysed
Personalising circulars
Catalogues, brochures, pamphlets and leaflets:
considerations in designing and producing them
Price lists and prices current lists

Module 7 - Enquiries, Quotations, Orders and Payments

The need to make enquiries:
enquiries by telephone, fax, email, via websites
Letters of enquiry:
when they are necessary

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- what they might contain
- Covering letters accompanying requests for quotations
- Quotations:
 - presented in a letter
 - presented in a quotation form
 - terms and conditions of supply
- Covering letters accompanying quotations
- Estimates and tenders:
 - what is involved
 - when they are prepared
- Orders:
 - why they should be in writing
 - order forms
 - other methods of ordering
 - letters
- Pro forma invoices:
 - when they might be issued and their uses
- Acknowledgements of orders
- Documents used in despatching goods:
 - supplier's advice note
 - delivery note
 - carrier's consignment note
- Payments for goods and services:
 - invoices
 - statements of account
 - payment vouchers
 - remittance advices
- Payments for imports/exports:
 - documentary bills of exchange
 - letters of credit:
 - revocable
 - irrevocable
 - confirmed irrevocable
 - bank drafts and bank transfers

Financial Terms and Expressions

- The meanings of some common financial terms:
- terms
 - accounting, account and accounts
 - assets
 - liabilities
 - debtors
 - creditors
 - capital
 - income
 - expenditure
 - profit and loss:
 - net profit or loss
 - gross profit or loss
 - final accounts
- Why final accounts are produced:
illustrations of:

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- a trading account
- a profit & loss account
- a balance sheet

Module 8 - Communications Between Employees

Oral communication:

- face to face conversations
- induction and training
- employee counselling
- joint consultation
- informal meetings
- formal meetings:
 - notices
 - agendas
 - minutes
- intercom systems

Written communications:

- work-related letters to subordinates
- memoranda:
 - how they differ from business letters
 - when they are used
- circulars and other printed literature
- suggestion schemes and suggestion boxes

Visual and audiovisual communication:

- organisation charts:
 - their value
 - updating
 - specimens of different representations
- linear and bar graphs and pie charts
- audiovisual equipment

Reports and report writing

Module 9 - Letters of Complaint: from Customers or Clients, to Suppliers

When and why letters of complaint or replies to them
might be necessary

Possible objectives of letters concerning complaints

Different tones in which letters may be written

Specimen letters of complaint with specimen replies thereto:

- justified complaints

- explaining cause:

- stating what has been, is being or can be done to put the matter right

- complainant at fault:

- suggesting a remedy or compromise

- neither party at fault

Offering something extra to satisfy a complainant:

- maintaining goodwill

The necessity for politeness and tact:

- using psychology

Reminder or warning letters

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References on business letters:

- why they are quoted
- how references may be constructed
- what to avoid

Explanations of abbreviations used

Writing to professionals, partnerships and firms

Module 10 - Drafting, Dictating, Checking and Despatching Letters 76

Drafting:

- benefits which can accrue from the process
- ensuring clarity
- aiding the typist or computer operator
- avoiding errors
- abbreviated writing

Stock sentences and paragraphs:

- manual use and WP use

Stock letters:

- form and circular types
- indexes

Copies of previously written letters as specimens

- for use again, modified as necessary

Written or oral notes or annotations as aids to letter

- construction by others - example

Shorthand and shortened forms of writing

Dictation to stenographers:

- planning dictation
- notes
- assisting the stenographer with:
 - layout
 - spelling and punctuation
 - special instructions

Dictaphones:

- advantages in their use
- audio-typists
- special matters to consider when dictating
 - into a machine

Typing direct to WP

Checking typed letters and other documents, envelopes and enclosures:

- examples of problems which can arise if errors are not spotted and corrected
- responsibility for errors

Matters to be checked before passing/signing

- a letter or other document:
 - addressee's name and address
 - the date
 - spelling and punctuation, figures and specific details
 - the layout, the typing and the general appearance
 - copies, enclosures and/or attachments
 - the envelope

Packing - folding the letter/document

Despatch:

- methods available - selecting the right one

Module 11 - Records and Filing

What records are and why they are maintained
Information from within the enterprise:
 sources
 formats
Information from external sources
Ways in which information may be recorded
Collating, analysing, arranging information, formats
The meanings of filing and filing systems
Filing for documents
Categories of records by "subject matter":
 accounts, sales, stock/inventory, HR/personnel
Factors to consider in selecting/evolving a filing system
Centralised filing:
 advantages and disadvantages
Filing schemes:
 alphabetic, numeric, geographic, chronological, subject
Cross referencing
Indexing
Record retention:
 policy formulation
 microfilming
Filing equipment:
 vertical and lateral filing
Loose card and visible card filing systems
Types of records: accounts, sales, stock, HR/personnel
Maintaining records by computer:
 characteristics of computers
 computers as aids to management/administration
 database packages
The importance of accurate data
Security of computer data:
 backup copies of data
 passwords/security codes
 dead/inactive data:
 external storage
 data deletion
 antivirus software

Module 12 - Telecommunications, Word Processing and Desktop Publishing

Technological developments:
 speed and ease of transmission
 the continued need for clarity
Developments in telephone technology:
 answering and recording devices
 portable and mobile/cell phones
text messaging (SMS):
 the need for clarity
Internal communication (intercom)
Fax transmission

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- uses and advantages
- fax machines and phone/fax machines
- computers with fax cards
- Communication by computer
 - the modem
 - dial-up connection
 - ADS and broadband:
 - advantages
 - remote access - VPN connection:
 - the firewall
 - benefits
- The Internet - the worldwide web:
 - its increasing importance in communication
 - internet service providers (ISP)
 - websites and website addresses
- Email:
 - advantages over other methods
 - the local area network (LAN)
 - email addresses
 - emails via the Internet
 - email packages:
 - standard features and facilities
- Computer viruses:
 - the need for protection
 - antivirus software
- Bar codes
- Magnetic Strips
- Smart cards
- OCR and scanning
- Word-processing (WP):
 - advantages of WP
 - saving typing time
 - standard and special features of WP packages
 - the spell checker and Thesaurus
 - personalising letters by WP
- Printers
- Desktop publishing:
 - what is involved and its capabilities