

Damascus University
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Department of English
Third Year / Second Semester

Module: Writing for the Workplace

Second Lecture

Effective written communication

Hello everyone..

In today's lecture, we will discuss how people communicate in the workplace. As you will see, we will talk about

- oral communication
- written communication, and
- When written communication is more effective
- Rules of good written communication

As I said earlier, the focus in this module is on written communication. However, it is necessary to make it clear to you the difference between written and oral communication and when each type is best used.

Introduction

People communicate using different methods such as sending an email, talking on the phone and placing print advertisements in specific places. Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between two people, a person and a group or a group to a group. Written and oral communication is used daily in meetings, lecture halls and exams. Written and oral communication are unique in that each word used must have specific purpose, otherwise it can lead to misunderstandings.

Over 70% of our time is spent communicating with others, and that's the one interaction every person must do. Everyone must communicate their needs and ideas. Every organization must communicate its products and services. Unfortunately, many people have trouble in this area. Some just don't have the professional impact they need to get ahead in today's corporate world.

Communication is technically defined as the process in which information is enclosed in a package and imparted from the sender to the receiver through a medium. Communication can be of many types and can be summarized in short as WOVEN, i.e. Written, Oral, Verbal, Electronic and Non-Verbal. Oral and written

forms of communication are the most common and frequently used forms of communication.

Oral communication

- Oral communication is transfer of information from sender to receiver by means of verbal and visual aid. Examples of oral communication include presentations, speeches, discussions, etc.
- Though the message is conveyed through words, most of the times oral communication is effectively carried out with the help of non-verbal communication like body language and tone modulations. Oral communication is also at times mixed with visual aid to help establish the conveyed message in a clear manner.
- Examples include usage of presentations in a seminar or meeting to put across the message in a clear manner.
- Oral communication can also be mixed with written communication methods to ensure that maximum effectiveness is achieved.
- There are many benefits of oral communication. This form of communication is a quick and direct method of

communication. Be it a criticism or praise or information, it helps to convey the message immediately to the receiver. This method of communication enables in obtaining immediate feedback and hence is a form in which two-way communication can be enabled.

- The other main advantage of this communication method is that it helps in conveying the message with the desired pitch and tone that is needed for the message. It also saves on time in a huge way and saves enormously on effort that is spent. Oral communication is a less formal method as compared to others and hence adds a personal touch to your message. Combined with the right kind of verbal communication, oral forms can create confidence and loyalty on the sender from the receiver's side.
- There are many ways to create an effective oral communication. It is important to ensure that the words are framed properly and are delivered in the right pitch and tone. Clarity, brevity and precision are mandatory features of an effective oral communication system. It is advisable to avoid complicated sentences and jargons so as to make sure that the message is conveyed across properly. It is important

to establish eye contact and to modulate body language based on the message. For example, a strict order can be conveyed better when communicated with a formal and stern body language as opposed to a casual and friendly one.

- Though it has many advantages, oral communication has its set of limitations also. This form of communication can be misinterpreted or misunderstood very easily. Communicating effectively through oral forms require high skills and is not something that everyone can master. It is also not a form of communication that can be used as a form of documentary evidence.

Written communication

- Next to oral communication, written communication is the oldest known form of communication. Any form of communication which is written and documented from the sender to the receiver is known as written communication. Examples of written communication include letters, memos, research papers, reports, etc.

- It is a very concrete form of documentary evidence and can also be used for future reference purposes. As the information is written, it can be easily distributed to many people thus making it a bulk communication method. As the information does not change from person to person, the accuracy of the information conveyed is same across the entire audience.
- To ensure an effective written communication form, it is a must to follow completeness, clarity and correctness in your writing. As there is no immediate feedback that can be received, it is important that written communication is detailed and accurate to ensure that the right message is communicated.
- Also remember to keep the communication simple and without any errors. Written communication also has its limitations like lack of feedback, absence of modulations to convey message effectively, etc. These can be overcome effectively by mixing oral communication with written so as to combine the advantages of both along with eliminating the disadvantages.

When Written Communication is More Effective

- Conveying Complex Information: When the sender wants to convey complex information, written communication serves better than oral communication. Having the written document, the receiver can read it repeatedly until he/she understands the entire message.
- Need for Permanent Record: Written communication is preferable when a permanent record is needed for future reference.
- Communicating with Large Audience: When the audiences are large in number and geographically dispersed, written communication is fruitful there. The sender can communicate repeatedly with the same written document or information sheet.
- Less Need for Interaction with Audience: Written communication is also suitable when immediate interaction with the audience is either unimportant, undesirable or unlikely to happen.

Five Key Rules of Good Writing (written communication)

1. Come straight to the point
2. Remember the kiss principle

3. Use active not passive voice
4. Use the right tone
5. Use modern language

1. Come straight to the point

Always remember that professionals are busy people. They can't (and won't) spend much time reading your C.V, letter, document, ...etc. Therefore, you need to come straight to the point. One way to do this is to shorten your sentences and paragraphs. Use simple sentences and familiar words.

2. Remember the Kiss principle

'KISS' Keep it short and simple. Again, use short sentence and simple words. Short sentences will keep your meaning clear and ensure easier understanding. Don't try to impress your readers with big words. Choose simple words. Simple words will convey your message more clearly. Choose one word instead of phrases.

Example:

ascertain –find out

at such time as – when

concur – agree

endeavour – try

give assistance – assist, help

in relation to – about

initiate – start, begin

prior to – before

reach a conclusion – conclude

sufficient – enough

3. Use active not passive voice

“Voice” refers to the relationship of a verb to its subject. Active voice means that the subject of the sentence does the action of the sentence. Passive voice means that the subject of the sentence receives the action. Use active voice in your writing. Active voice is more alive, more focused, more personal, much more interesting and clear. Active voice makes your sentences shorter.

Example:

✓ The committee will meet next Monday.

X A meeting will be held by the committee next Monday.

4. Use the right tone

Written communication can be worded with different tones. Wrong tone in writing communication could cause real offense to the readers. Choose a tone to suit the reader and the subject matter. If you are angry or frustrated, try not to vent your emotions in writing. Your objectives will be achieved only with carefully considered and appropriate wording. The use of unaffected language will help you to achieve the right tone.

5. Use modern language

The main rule of writing today is to write as you speak. If you find yourself writing something that you would not say to the person if you were having a conversation, then you should not be writing it either. Eliminate useless jargon by writing as you speak. When you are writing, ask yourself whether you would say this if you were speaking.

Finally, never forget to Ensure for accuracy of

- Spellings
- Punctuation
- Tenses
- Word ending, etc

And double check all figures, dates and numbers in your document.

To eliminate errors:

- use computer spelling and grammar check functions;
- take a break from your writing for an hour or a day and come back to it later to re-read it carefully;
- ask a trusted colleague or friend to proofread your writing;
- read your writing aloud to yourself; and
- print off your writing and re-read it.

This is all for today.. “How to write your first CV” is the focus of our next lecture. See you then!

Thank you!