
UNIT 5 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Objectives

After completing this unit you will be able to:

- outline the process of marketing communication, which is also relevant in sales communication
- identify the various communication objectives, media and types
- discuss the factors that influence a firm's choice of the media ® relate the non-verbal to interpersonal transactions
- understand how to write effective sales letters.

Structure

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 How Communication Works
- 5.3 Communication Objectives
- 5.4 Communication Media and their Characteristics
- 5.5 Selecting Media Options
- 5.6 Non-Verbal Communication (NVC)
- 5.7 Oral Communication
- 5.8 Interpersonal Communication
- 5.9 Non-Verbal Behaviour in Interpersonal Interactions
- 5.10 Written Communication
- 5.11 Writing Sales Letters and Other Materials
- 5.12 Summary
- 5.13 Key Words
- 5.14 Self-Assessment Questions
- 5.15 Further Readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The word 'communication' is based on the Latin word meaning 'common'. Thus the term communication has come to mean 'sharing something of common use.

In marketing, communication has a very important place. It is that function of marketing which is charged with the task of informing the target customer about the nature and type of the firm's products and services, their unique benefits, uses and features as well as the price and place at which those would be available in the market place. Since marketing communication aim at influencing the consumer behaviour in favour of the firm's offerings, these are persuasive in nature. These persuasive communications are more commonly called 'Promotion' and constitute one of the Ps of the marketing mix.

A study of marketing communication, therefore, is a study of the promotion function of marketing. Notwithstanding the continuing debate whether promotion is the first element of the marketing mix or the last, the fact remains that sound management of the marketing function is dependant on the effective management of its promotion function. Similarly, the examples of the products which misfired due to faulty management of the promotion function are not to seek. As stated above communication will be complete only when the receiver understands in the same sense what the sender wished to convey. The effectiveness of the communication process, therefore, independent upon the level of congruity and compatibility obtaining among the various elements of the communication process, i.e., between the sender and the message, the message and the media, the media and the receiver, and so on. Incongruity and/or incompatibility between the various elements of the communication process might make the promotion function, and in turn the marketing function, ineffective.

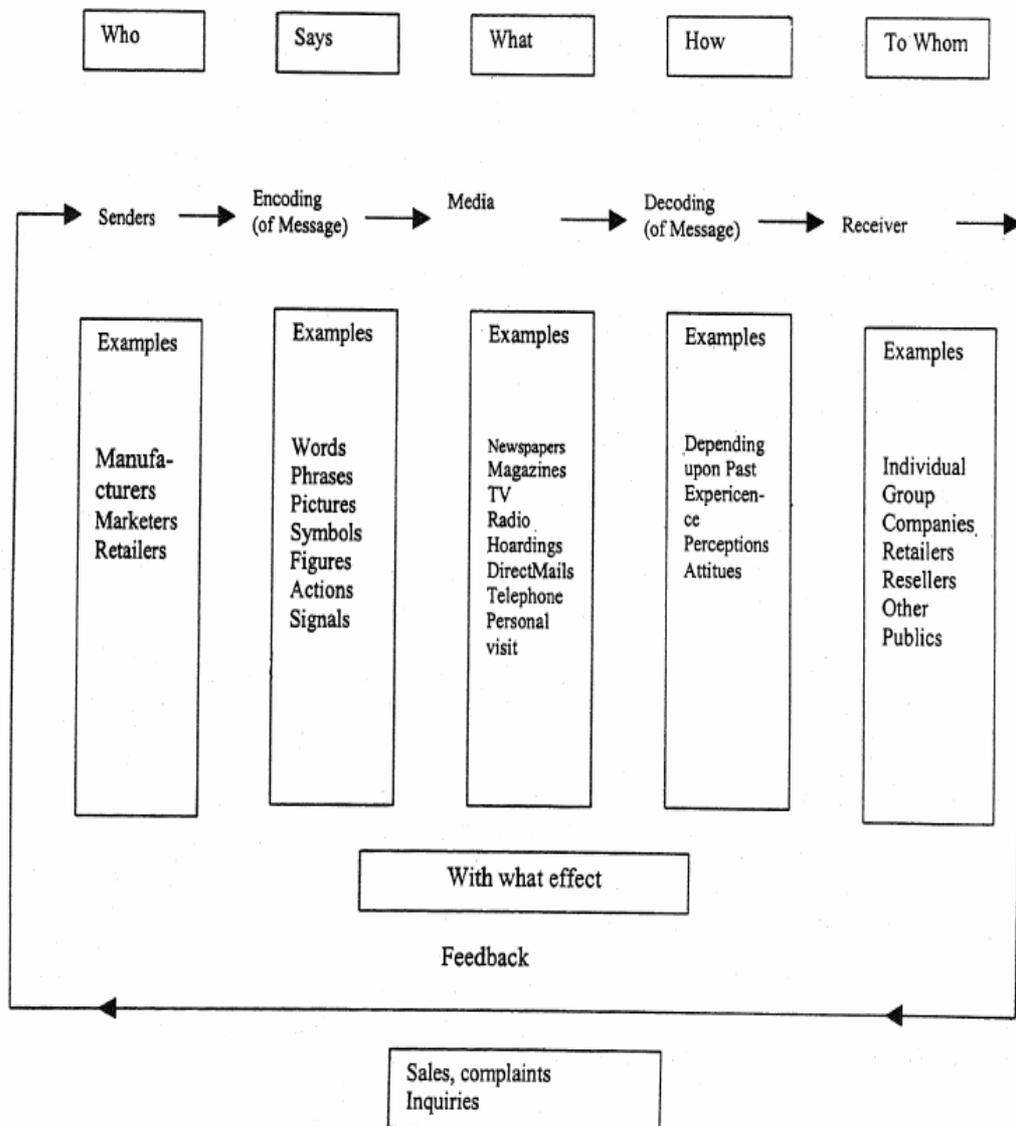


With growing competition in the market place, as well as the customers becoming better informed and more choosy it is imperative now that marketing communications, of the right kind only are made to the right group of target buyers. In order to understand how the promotion function can be managed effectively let us begin by first taking a look at how communications work.

5.2 HOW COMMUNICATION WORKS.

We know by now that communication, simply speaking, is sharing of information between the two parties. Such an exchange could be oral or written, personal or public using words, figure, symbols or a communication thereof. The process of communication beings when one party (called source, sender or communicator) wishes to communicate with another party (the receiver). Communication is complete when the receiver understands in the same sense what the sender wished to communicate. The various elements of a typical communication process are given in Figure 1.

Figures 1: Elements of the Communication Process



The various elements are (a) the source; (b) the target; (c) the message (transmitted); (d) the message (received); (e) the goal of the message; (f) the medium.



The Source

The source of communication contributes to its effectiveness. A lot of research has been done on source credibility. One source may be more credible than others, and communication from such a source may produce more effective results. For some messages a senior manager may be a more credible source, whereas for other types of messages a union leader may have higher credibility. It may be useful to determine the credibility level of the various sources for different categories of messages.

Some studies have been done on key communicators - the effective sources of communication. Key communicators in villages, influencing adoption of improved agricultural practices, were found to have higher social preference, greater contacts with change agents, higher communication skills, and higher adoption behaviour compared with low communicators.

The Target

If the target of communication is receptive, the communication is likely to be effective. It may, therefore, be useful to assess a target's readiness and receptivity, and take necessary action to ensure a minimum level before sending the message. Communication should meet the target's needs. Receptivity may be determined by the perception of the source, his own need, and the instrumentality of communication (that the act of communication will satisfy his felt need).

The Message and its Goal

The message may be one of three types: information, a feeling, or a request for action. Communication of ideas and knowledge are communication of information. Communication of concerns, reactions, pleasant or unpleasant feelings, attitudes, likes and dislikes relate to the second category of message (feeling). In addition to these two types of messages, a message may relate to orders or requests to do certain things.

The Media

The media used in communication can be classified in several ways. Media may be verbal or non-verbal. Non-verbal communication is an important as, and in some cases even more - important than verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes such a variety of behaviour that these cannot be enumerated. Even silence may be eloquent and may I communicate a message. In attitudes and values, non-verbal communication is much more influential. Researches have shown that one of the most effective way of developing social skills and attitudes is modeling, living the values and attitudes you want to others to practice. People learn more from what they experience than what they hear. In an organisation the message of a General Manager orally delivered about the importance of technical people may have no effect if he himself does not have respect for them, and may often overrule the decision recommended by them on the basis of analysis of technical data.

A verbal medium can either be in written or oral form, and either in a face-to-face or distance situation. Letters and telephones are the distance media.

5.3 COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

Mutually satisfying exchange being the ultimate goal of marketing, the role of promotion, therefore, is to encourage such an exchange through linking communications with the product adoption process of the buyer. Motivating the adoption of the promoted product as well as effecting the desired change in the consumer behaviour then are the goals of the promotion function. The attainment of these goals presupposes that product purchase process be understood by the marketers before marketing communications are designed. While there are many models that help to conceptualise the buying process, two very specific models that aid in understanding the buying process as well as in framing communication are; 'AIDAS' and 'Hierarchy-of-effects' models.



The AIDA acronym stands for : Attention (also called awareness), Interest, Desire and Action. According to AIDA model, a marketer should begin by **wining attention or gaining awareness, creating interest, inspiring desire and precipitating the action for purchase**, in the prospects in order to enable its product to be adopted by the target public.

Under the **hierarchy-off-effects** model, the buyers purchase decision is preceded by steps such as conviction about the product benefits, preference for the brand, **liking** for the brand, **knowledge** relating to the benefits and features of the product, after an awareness of the product has been gained.

The basic implication of these models is that the function of persuasive communication or promotion should be handled deftly at every stage of the buyer's adoption process. Based on Lavidge and Steiner research, Gaedeke and Tootelian illustrate the various promotional tools that might be relevant to each stage of the hierarchy-of-effects model which is given in Figure 2. This Figure also brings out the variety of promotional tools that are available to marketers for making marketing communications.

Figure 2 : Promotion and the Hierarchy-of-effects Model

Hierarchy-of-effects stage (movement toward purchase)	promotion that might be relevant to various stage
Awareness ↓ Knowledge	Teaser Campaigns Jingles and slogans classified ads Point-of-purchase displays Publicity
↓ Liking ↓ Preference	Informative or descriptive ads Status or glamour appeals Demonstration Image ads Comparison ads
↓ Conviction ↓ Purchase	Testimonials Coupons, discounts, other incentives Point-of-purchase displays Retail Store ads Reminder ads

Activity 1

If your company is launching a product in a new product category in which there is no competitors, what would be your promotional objectives? Why?

.....

.....

.....

5.4 COMMUNICATION MEDIA AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

For marketing communication, or in the sales function we use a variety of communication media, both written and oral. It is, therefore, important that before we start discussion on sales communications, let us first see the differences between any written and oral



communication. These differences are summarised in Figure 3. It is important to understand these differences clearly before we plan our sales communication.

Figure 3 : Differences between Written and Oral Communication

Communication Mix	Written	Oral
PURPOSE	Analytical & Reasoning	Assimilative & Emotive
AUDIENCE	Non-Interactive	Interactive
MEDIUM	Frozen (Verbal) Seeing	Fluid (Verbal & Non-verbal, Bearing
MESSAGE	Complicated/Long	Simple/Short
FEEDBACK	None or Delayed	Quick & Immediate
TIME	Long/Flexible	Short/Inflexible
PLACE	Non-restrictive	Restrictive
COST	High	Low

Source: Srinivas Rao "Purposive Presentation Mix, copyright Q 1979 by the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

- i) **Purpose:** Any document is written with a purpose to analyse the situation and to give reasoning for the recommendations which were being made. Whereas an oral presentation is assimilative and emotive. Speaker has to make his/her presentation impactful by involving himself/herself with the topic or subject. Speaker is an integral part of the message, and therefore the challenge is in selecting the right combinations of facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, postures etc.
- ii) **Audience:** The other difference is that in an oral presentation the audience are interactive, i.e., you can read the audience's reaction in their body language and you may accordingly adjust your message if desired. While in a written communication the audience, are non-interactive as you write down a message to send across and you may not have any interaction with the receiver.
- iii) **Medium :** In a written communication, whatever you write or illustrate is frozen in words and visuals. While in the case of oral presentation the medium is fluid. The audio-visual aids, their synchronisation with verbal, body language, atmosphere, etc., can make a sales presentation successful.

The non-verbal, particularly in oral presentation is of extreme importance. Your facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures etc. help to make spoken words clear, meaningful, convincing and effective.
- iv) **Message:** In a written communication the message is invariably long and complex, whereas an oral presentation has to be short and simple. For example, if you are making a presentation on a report you have written, you can make your presentation in the form of paper reading. Imagine how much time you would require to read a fifty page report and do you think that the audience will have patience to listen to you for that long? Therefore, you have to tailor your message which should appeal to your audience and for this reason it should be small and simple.
- v) **Feedback:** The chief advantage of oral communication is the opportunity for an instant feedback. This channel or medium can be effectively used when you don't require a permanent record of feedback. In a written communication invariably the feedback is delayed or it doesn't exist at all.
- vi) **Time, Place, Cost:** These are the other three points of differentiation between oral and written communication. A presentation has to be made at an allotted place, on a predecided date and time, while in written communication the place is non-restrictive and time is flexible. As far as the cost aspects are concerned, in general, cost of an oral presentation is low as compared to written communication, unless one is using sophisticated high-tech. equipment.



After noticing the difference between oral presentation and written report you should be now clear that an oral presentation is just not reading a prepared text; rather it is an interactive situation with the audience, where your non-verbal matters and the challenge is in putting across your message in a simple and short form, which your audience can comprehend and retain. You also use body language to influence clarity.

5.5 SELECTING MEDIA OPTIONS

There are no hard and fast rules about which channel of communication to choose. Whether you should speak or whether you should write depends on the context. Decisions about communicating, either individually to a group, may depend on the personalities of the people involved. Nevertheless, it's possible to establish some guidelines, based on common sense.

You write when:

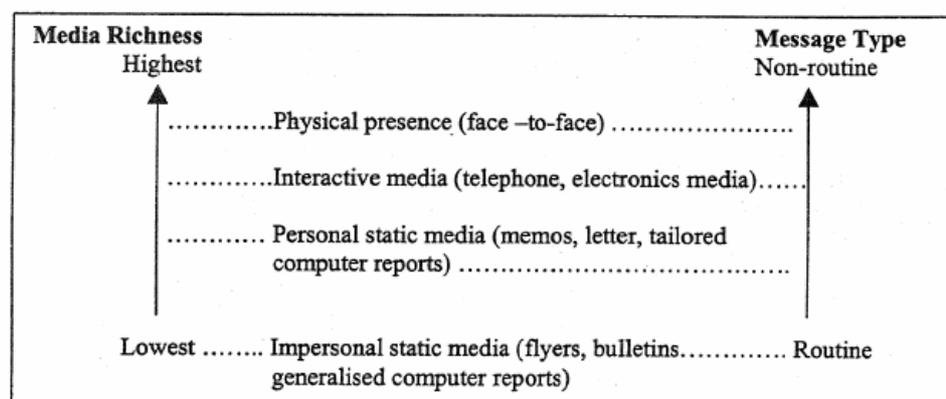
- you or the reader wants a record of the communication;
- you don't need an answer but are simply supplying information;
- the receiver is preoccupied with other pressing matters;
- the information is complicated or detailed;
- costs of telephoning are excessive.

You talk when:

- you want to encourage discussion;
- you need a quick response;
- you want to foster a personal relationship;
- you want to build group rapport;
- You are dealing with a personal or sensitive matter.

Aside from whether you write or speak the particular medium you choose can affect the reception of your message. The term medium overlaps the term channel but usually has a more specific meaning, referring to the vehicle or mechanism you choose to communicate, whether a meeting, the telephone, a memo, or sophisticated technology. When Marshal McLuhan said, "The medium is the message," he may have overstated the case, but there's no doubt that the choice of medium influences how messages are interpreted.

Figure 4 : Choosing the Best Medium



Source: Adapted from R.Lengel and R. Datt "The Selection of Communication Media as an Executive Skill." *Executive*, 2:3 (1988), 225-232.

One way of attacking the problem of choice is to think about the "richness" of the medium; that is, the number of different ways a message can be inferred or reinforced. For example, a telephone is a richer medium than a newsletter, because the receiver can listen to tone as well as to the words, and can question the sender. Similarly, television is richer than radio, because it permits seeing as well as hearing. Lengel and Daft have suggested that the more



complicated or controversial the information, the richer the medium you should use. As Figure 4 shows, a memo works well for a routine message, but for news about plant layoffs, a face-to-face meeting would be better.

5.6 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION (NYC)

Non-verbal means of communication include all communication forms that involves neither written nor spoken words, but occur without the use of words. Some of the types are as follows:

- Body Movements : Kinesics
- Space : Proxemics
- Voice Patterns : Paralanguage
- Time : Chronemics
- Touch
- Colour
- Layout/Design/Graphics
- Objects

Kinesics

When communicating, with others in a face-to-face situation our entire body participates in communication, which is called body language, like

- Facial Expression
- Eye Contact
- Gestures
- Posture, movements etc.

Like all other forms of communication, non-verbal message should be sincerely planned otherwise gesture & body movements usually appear to be just that faked. Use gestures naturally to reinforce the meaning you are expressing through words. Too much shuffling of gestures, postures is distracting & annoying.

Space : Proxemics

Special change gives tone to a communication. It accents it and at times even overrides the spoken words. Proxemics involves how we arrange personal space and what we arrange in it. It is said that each one of us have four space circles around us ,which are as follows:

First, consider the one & half feet circle around you. Only special but a few people are permitted here - Intimate Space

Second, inspect the four feet, beyond the first circle, friendly conversations and spontaneous communications normally occur here - Personal Space

Third, examine the personal space 4-12 feet around you. It is used more formally - i.e., for business or social situations

Last, observe the space beyond 12-16 feet things of least significance occur here - Public Space

A "Superior" can, by placing himself physically extremely close to a subordinate create a certain type of atmosphere or otherwise.

Voice & Non-Verbal Vocalisation - Paralanguage

When we speak apart from the spoken words, the manner in which a word was spoken, relates to paralanguage. In paralanguage we consider two aspects. First is the voice set which



includes various measurements of voice in terms of intensity are pitch. Rhythm and resonance. These can be measured through some physical instruments used for measuring sound.

The second is the -un-Verbal Vocalisation which includes laughing, crying, verbal pause & interludes of silence like: "AH's," "OH's".....etc...

5.7 ORAL COMMUNICATION

Communication to most of us means writing something for someone. When it comes to improving communication skills we are only concerned with improving written communication skills and we don't pay any attention to improving our oral communication skills. We even think that there is no scope for improvement and we therefore don't even attempt.

According to a research, an average manager in general spends only 9% of his/her time in writing, 16% in reading, 30% in speaking and 45% in listening, as shown in the following figure 1:

Oral Communication doesn't mean speaking only i.e., public speaking, making business presentations, participating or conducting meetings, interviews, etc, but it also includes listening.

It is said that communication begins with listening and the fact is that you can't be an effective speaker unless you are a good listener - one can't speak unless one listens.

Significance of Oral Communication

Oral Communication, which is face to face communication with others, has its own benefits. Not only does it provides the opportunity for feedback but when people communicate orally they are able to interact, they can ask questions and even test their understanding of the message. In addition people can also relate and comprehend the non-verbal, that serves far more than words. By observing facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, gestures, postures etc., one can understand the message better. Oral communication also makes people feel good as it satisfies one of our deepest needs of being part of a community, group identity and high morale.

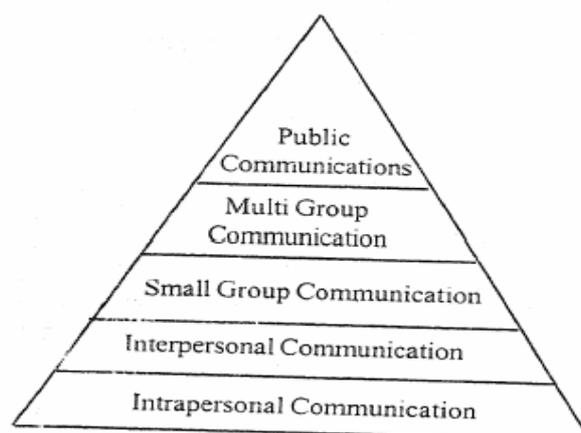
The only shortcoming of oral communication is that more often than not it is spontaneous and if you communicate incorrectly your message will not go understood.

It is primarily due to this reason one needs to develop effective oral communication skills as a message, if not understood at appropriate time, can lead to disaster.

Levels of Oral Communication

The hierarchical nature of the five basic levels and corresponding types of oral communication are shown in the given figure5.

Figure 5 : Levels of Sales Communication





Interpersonal Communication

This is most basic form of communication relating to listening, observing and interpreting. We all process the information which we receive. Each one of us observe things and draw meaning out of it. When we talk to someone we listen. The degree of attention we are able to give to the speaker, would determine our understanding. We also observe body language, the manner in which a word is spoken, facial expressions, etc., and we reassure ourselves that the meaning we have drawn out of this information which we received is correct.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal Communication builds on the intrapersonal level, by adding another person to the communication situation and introducing a dyadic relationship. A dyad is defined as two persons who seek to exchange information, which could be a situation like interviewing, telephoning or dictating. In each of these situations also one has to decide what to say, when to say, how to say etc.

Group Communication

The group communication is further divided into two levels - small group and multi-group. Small group communications in turn builds on dimensions of group dynamics and multiple interpersonal relationships to the communication situation. Multi-group communication exists through the combination of three other levels (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal and Small group) involving coordination with a large number of people involved in the shared accomplishment of complex goods. It is therefore important to recognise group communication at the small group and multi-group levels. Various types of meetings, training situations, committees, etc. fall in this category. In such cases the group communication has to be effective, otherwise it may not help to meet the objectives for which the group is meeting.

Public or Mass Communication

In addition to the above levels of communication, there are other forms of communication also. These additional forms of communication are public communication or mass communication. Public communication takes place when one person or a small number of people address a larger group of people. Although the speaker assumes the major responsibility for public communication and sends the preponderance of verbal messages, the speaker is not the only person engaging in communication. The audience sends messages to the speaker, primarily through nonverbal channels. Speeches, lectures, oral reports and dramatic performances are Be different form of public communication.

In a situation of public or mass communication one should be very selective and specific. A number of times an unclear statement made orally to a large group might be interpreted differently by different people who can further complicate a situation, rather than solving it.

In sum, as a corporate manager when you communicate, you communicate at different levels, at each level you spend your time differentially. However, all these five levels namely; intrapersonal, interpersonal, small group, multi group and public communication are important. To be successful as a manager, therefore, you need to develop skills to communicate effectively all the levels of communication.

5.8 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Interpersonal communication is the basis of most interactions in organisation. Persons in organisations interact with the others within their own groups, across groups, and across levels. The effectiveness of these communication may contribute a great deal to the smooth functioning of organisations.

Interpersonal communication can be defined as the process of sharing of goal-oriented messages between two or more sources through a medium or media. Communication is a process. It consists of several units. The basic unit of communication can be called a communication act. This can be defined as follows: **A communication act** is the



transmission, through a medium or media, of a goal-oriented message from source to and its reception by a target.

Most of the time in a day is spent in some sort of interpersonal situation rather than all by oneself without being a member of a group. Most of the daily experience was based on interaction with other human beings. Some experiences in these relationships are joyful and others may be upsetting or remained stagnant or have even been abandoned. Understanding these relationships will help you develop and improve relationships. This leads to Interpersonal competence. 'Interpersonal Competence' refers to the degree to which one is accurately aware of impact on others and to the impact of others on you.

A person in an organisation is surrounded by three other types of persons: Superiors, colleagues and subordinates. Besides these three types of role one has to interact with a lot of other people from different positions. Consumers, suppliers, people from regulatory agencies, general public, etc.

The determinants of interpersonal behaviour are:

Self-concept: Self-concept is a reflection of all the past experiences one has with others and includes characteristics which differentiate from others. Once self-concept is established and certain specific patterns of behaviour are adopted, it tends to resist change. In order to maintain interpersonal environment and to maximise congruence of harmony, certain mechanisms are used.

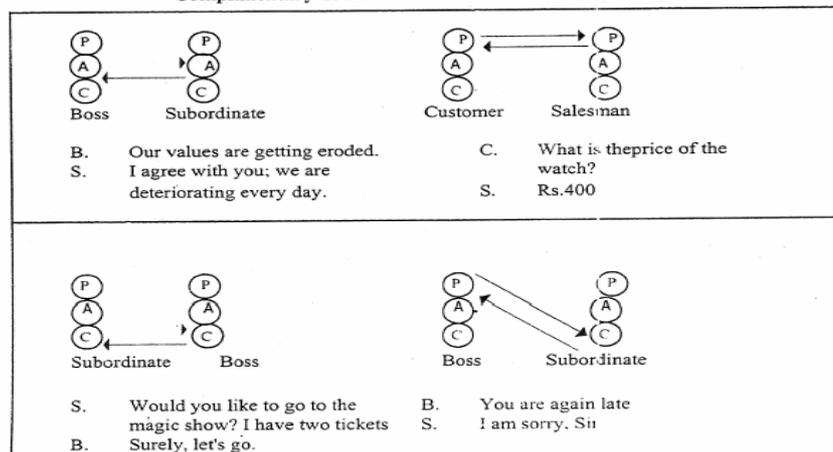
1. Misperception: Misperceiving how others look at you.
2. Selective Interaction: Interact with those persons who can establish a congruent state
3. Selective Evaluation of the other person
4. Selective Evaluation of self
5. Response Evocation: Behave in a way that results in others behaving towards you in an amicable manner.

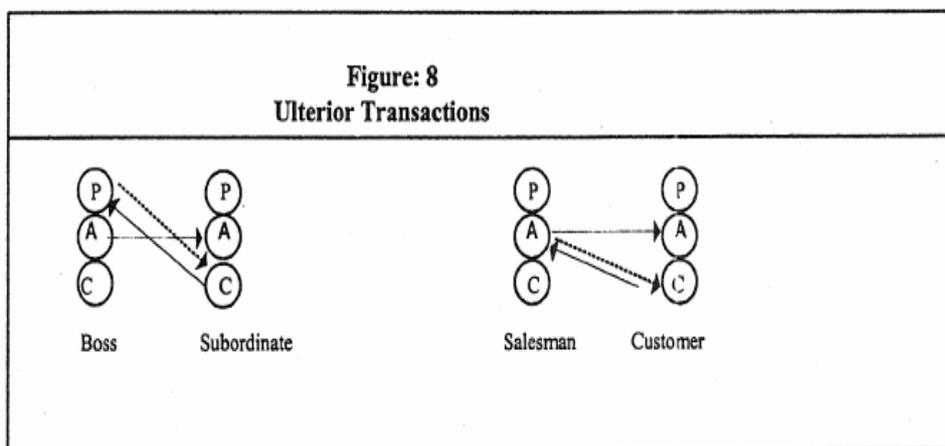
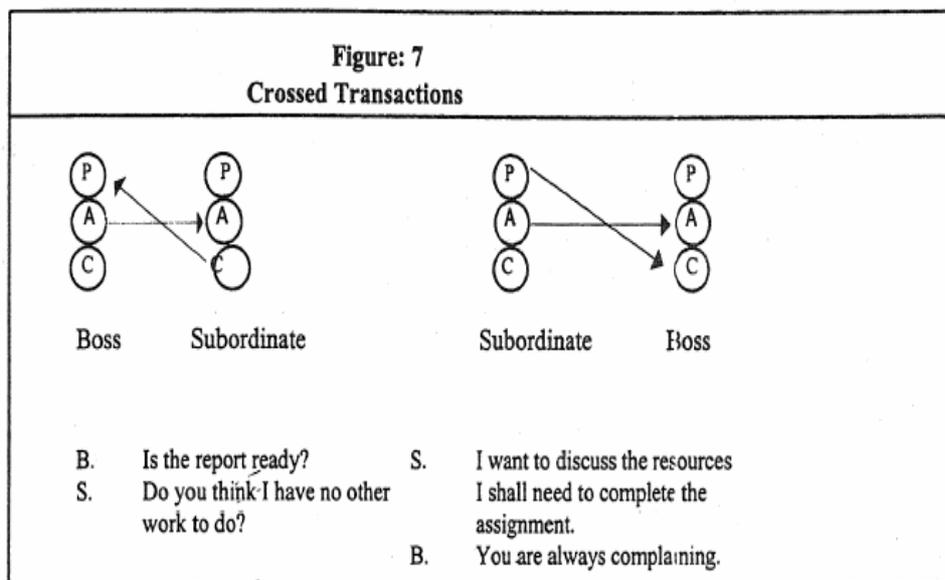
People need people for three main interpersonal needs:

1. Inclusion - the need for interaction and association
2. Control - the need for control and power
3. Affection - the need of love and affection.

When a group begins to interact and acquire information of others' views and attitudes bonds of attraction form most strongly between those who hold similar views towards things that are important and relevant to both. A person likes others who have the same feeling towards him or her as that person has toward himself or herself. This reinforces one's self-concept and facilitates interpersonal relations. People interact more frequently with those who are perceived as confirming their self-concept to the greatest extent.

Figure: 6
Complimentary Transactions





There are four stages of developing interpersonal relationship:

- 1). Forming first impressions
- 2). Developing mutual expectations
- 3). Honouring Psychological contracts
- 4). Developing trusts and influence.

First impressions though often not right are lasting impressions. First impressions are lasting because they influence the way in which people see subsequent data about the perceived object or person. When people are mutually impressed, they are more likely to enter into a long-term relationship. When this happens, they develop certain expectations about each other. An effective inter or work relationship cannot develop and be maintained unless the participants are willing to honour their psychological contracts. The results of the meeting the psychological contract is an increased level of trust and influence. When the parties to the contract are able to meet their mutual expectations, the relationship produces mutual trust and favourable sentiment.

In 'developing interpersonal skills', interpersonal competence can be greatly enhanced by enlarging 'Arena' with the help of feedback and self-disclosure. Arena represents the 'public Self that is known to the self and others. Development of cooperative relationships is facilitated when there are shared goals, mutually perceived power and the minimum level of distrust. Thus, it shows that interpersonal relations cannot flourish unless the parties are prepared to take certain interpersonal risks.



Good work has been done in Transactional Analysis on messages. One part of the message exchanged between two persons is called a transaction. When A sends a message, B receives it; B responds and this is received by that is one transaction. A person can send a prescriptive or admonishing message (from what is called the Parent ego state); or an information message (from the Adult ego state); or a feeling message (from the Child ego state). Any of these message may be sent to (and received by) one of the three ego states of the other person (Parent, Adult, or Child). If the response is by the same ego state as through which the message was received, it is called a complimentary or parallel transaction. Such transactions are very satisfying. These are shown in Figure 6. The response however, may not originate from the ego state which has received the message. Then it is a crossed transaction. Figure 7 give examples of crossed transactions.

A message sent may not be simple one. To use Transactional Analysis (TA) terminology a message sent may have two targets (of ego states). There may be an overt message (open and expressed). But it may also contain a covert message (a hidden one). Transactions with such messages are called ulterior transactions. Figure 8 shows these transactions.

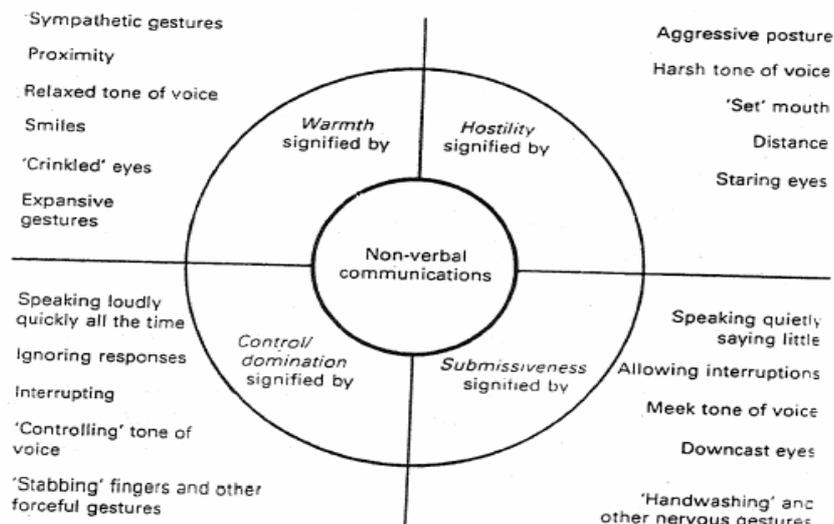
In the definition of communication a distraction is made between the transmitted message and the received message. The received message (the interpretation) may not be the same as the transmitted message. For example, a message of feelings may be transmitted by an employee when he narrates an experience to his boss, but the latter may receive only the information message, and not the feeling message. Or, a boss may transmit a message of negative feelings (he may receive a message of sarcasm when the boos may actually be expressing appreciation). There is no guarantee that the transmitted and received messages will be the same. In many cases these turn out to be different, and this distortion causes problems.

5.9 NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOUR IN INTER-PERSONAL INTERACTIONS

Having discussed the various forms of non-verbal communication and also the interpersonal communication, let us now relate the two. This will help you to understand the relevance of observing the non-verbal during a sales interactions, which is the most common interpersonal communication situation, a sales person face.

Most human feelings, a emotional and thoughts can be communicated through a mix of non verbal forms of communication. Let us take some typical examples, as shown in figure 9.

Figure 9 : Non- verbal Communication



Source : John Ldstone, Manual Sales Negotiations, (England : Govers, 1991), p. 214.



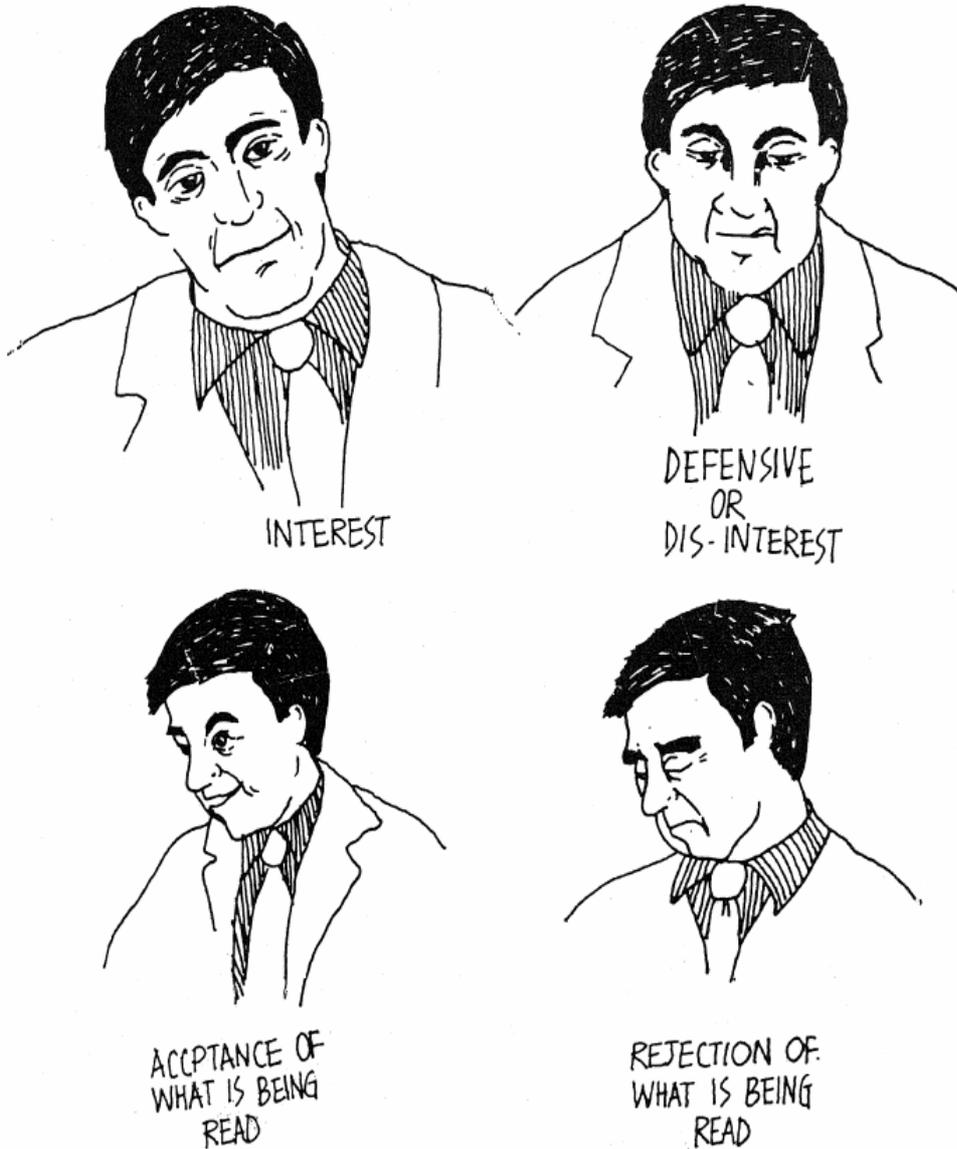
You would appreciate that facial expressions, gestures and postures can convey quite a few feelings and emotional responses.

For example, crinkled eyes convey warmth, staring eyes convey hostility and downcast eyes suggest submissiveness.

Facial Expressions :

Similarly, a smile on the face conveys a liking for the other; as against a 'serious' facial expressions. In figure 10, types of facial expressions have been shown, to further illustrate the point.

Figure 10 : Facial Expressions Conveying Acceptance - Rejection and Interest - Disinterest



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Gestures can also convey various emotional responses. In the figure 11 we have taken six examples to illustrate the point. You may notice from these illustrations that the way you position your hand against the face, would change the meaning. For example, hands on chin with pointing up figure held to the cheek, might suggest critical comparison. The same hand when shifts to the nose would convey reluctance and when it is held against the lips, it conveys, disbelief.

Further, hand movements i.e., gestures, can also help in supplementing your message or describe things clearly, during a sales presentation. (Detailed discussion on the gestures in relation to a presentation has been given in Unit 6.

Figure 11 : Position of the hand and its gestures : Placement on the face



Postures, i.e., body position can also convey messages or responses.

Assume that in a sales presentation your prospect holds his face between his hands and bends forward to place elbows on the legs, near the knees. You would obviously draw a meaning that the person got bored with your propositions.

Similarly postures can convey to you whether your prospect is defensive, resentful, enthusiastic or open-minded about your proposals, as shown in the figure 12.



RESENTFUL



DEFENSIVE



CONFIDENCE



BORED OR DEJECTED
BY YOUR PROPOSITION



READINESS TO GET GOING



ENTHUSIASTIC OPEN MINDEN
ABOUT YOUR PROPOSITION

To win a customer, in all sales interactions, it is important to take the feedback, continuously. The feedback can help you to re-adjust your message, clarify the doubts, or supplement the sales talk with more information. This feedback invariably, can be taken by observing the body language of your prospective customer. You may observe the facial expressions, gestures or postures.

Each of these forms of non-verbal communication, can give you a feedback about the response of your customer which can help you in effectively adopting your message to win a sales or a customer.

5.10 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

A good salesperson has strong written communication skills very often as a salesperson you are required to write to your customers. Also a salesperson has to communicate with different people within the organization.

The purpose of writing is to communicate a thought, an idea, feeling or fact. The more concrete and concise these elements in a communication, the more easy it is for a reader to respond to your communication. Also make sure that when you are writing you don't miss out on some essential detail e.g. you are informing your key customers about the launch of a new product, but forget to write to them where and whom to contact for the product. How irritated your customer will feel.



Good letter writing

Whenever writing to your customers be as specific as possible, giving all the pertinent information as accurately as possible. Keep only the required information in your letter as no customer has spare time these days to go through unnecessary information. As a guideline you can divide your letter into three parts: -

The basic patterns of a routine or good-news letter is :

- Write most important points first,
- give supporting details,
- end with a good-will statement.

Let us take an example of structuring a letter

Poor	Thank you for your order. We at Top packaging are happy to do business with companies such as yours and look forward to future 'orders.
Better	The corrugated cartons you ordered have been shipped, and you should receive in 15 days. They were sent this morning by train.

The corrugated cartons you ordered were shipped by train this morning. You should receive their in 15 days. At Top packaging we are happy to do business with companies such as yours.

Often the first sentence of a letter or a memo is weakened by an unneeded opening phrase such as I would like to inform you..., This is to tell you.... etc. For most business correspondence avoid such openings and start right with the main point. On some occasions, it may be useful to refer to the date of previous correspondence.

Structuring refusals or bad news correspondence

It is always difficult to say no, especially in writing. You can use two approaches, the direct approach and the indirect approach.

The Direct Approach: If you know the receiver well, or when the bad news is expected and not very important say informing a colleague that your report will be completed later than scheduled or telling your boss details of a known problem.

When using this approach it is suggested that you should:

- state the bad news simply and directly,
- give the reasons, and
- close with a good-will statement.

Let us take an example of structuring a bad news correspondence using the direct approach.

We have not been able to locate the quotation you requested. We have searched our records and haven't been able to find anything similar to one you mentioned.

You may, have better luck by looking in the Times Directory on the above subject.

We hope your search is soon successful.

The Indirect Approach: In this approach it is suggested that you should:

- begin with a neutral opening statement,
- give reasons or circumstances leading to bad news,
- state the bad news in as positive terms as possible,
- give a helpful suggestion or alternative, and
- close with a good will statement.



Let us take an example of a letter using indirect approach to turn down a request for conference sponsorship.

Every year in February our conference committee meets to discuss the sponsorships from our company, such as your request for Annual Conference. Your proposal arrived in March, after we had already committed our funds for this year. Hence we are unable to help you this year. If your annual conference is going to be a regular event every year, do send us the details by January next year so that we can add this to our list. In the meantime, I wish you every success with your conference.

Activity 2

Take two sales letter you have been written to you clients. One letter should be on prospecting for business and other a reminder letter for the outstanding. Compare their writing styles

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.....

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5.11 WRITING SALES LETTERS AND OTHER MATERIALS

A good sales approach would definitely involve the application of the basic principles of communication. In addition, you have the responsibility of establishing trust and belief with your prospects, through your correspondences. All sales communications should resist the use of "Hard selling" approach as its neither creditable nor useful.

The suggestions, therefore are all sales communications must convince the prospect that their purchase will meet their needs, better than the rest and he see a good 'value-for-money' in your brand. In other words, the seller should present their product in terms of what it will do for the buyer. If, as a seller, you think your brand has nothing worthwhile to offer, you would find that your sales message doesn't became convincing. To make your sales message convincing, it is therefore important to identify such distinctive features, which in communication we call as 'central selling points'.

In addition, there are other special characteristics of sales letters and sales materials. Some are of these points are as follows, which have been discussed in relation to a sales. Letter shown in Exhibit 1.

Firstly, the general approach centered around four approach. This approach is typically followed to suggest how the receiver will benefit from the purchase. For example, in the letter shown in exhibit 1. It is mentioned that the receiver would have better career opportunities in the Information Technology industry, after doing the course.

Secondly, sales letters emphasise on the overall message, by using specific forceful words and phrases. For example, in the exhibit 1. Word and expression like, unmatched, unique blank semester advantage, state of the act', most qualified, ` etc are used.

Thirdly all sales letters use mechanical means of emphasising on the contents. These mechanical means reange from the use capital letters, underlining specific lines or parts of line, use of colour in the text if it is a printed letter, specific arrangement/placement, box item, etc. For example in the letter shown in Exhibit 1, a few things are written in bold and in capitals.



TULEC
COMPUTER
EDUCATION

Dear Mr. _____

We would like to introduce our self as a premier Software training Organisation in India with an ISO 9001 Certification for conduction of course, courseware design & development.

As you are aware that Information Technology (IT) industry which is taking giant leap and growing at fastest pace. So, is the career opportunities in IT also.

At TULEC the courseware is designed in such a way that it suits the requirements of future IT ASPIRANTS. As, being A Div. Of Tata Infotech Ltd, the quality of courseware academics and services are unmatched. To pace with the future IT industry, TULEC has designed its courseware with a unique blank semester advantage, with its well equipped library, state of art lab, diligent placement cell and above all, most qualified and NTCC faculty, TULEC has made its stand in foremost IT services organisation. That is what TULEC assures in

WALK IN WITH A DREAM

WALK OUT WITH A FUTURE

We at TULEC convert every dream into brightening future. For further details of courseware we offer, and various prospects in IT, may we request you to give us an appointment at your convenient hour and day to inform you more about us or you are most welcome at our centre. Hope to hear from you soon

Yours friend at TULEC

PS:

Special packages for *Students, *Housewives * Working Ladies * Senior Citizens School Kids

Lastly, in general, all sales letters have an informal style of writing. You may observe it in Exhibit 1 also. For example normally in one business letters we invariably white 'sincerely' in the signature block. But in the signature block of this letter in place of 'sincerely'; your' friends at TULEC is written.

5.12 SUMMARY

The basic purpose of communication is to develop understanding with your audience. In a sales situations your customers are your audience. To be successful in all communication situations, it is important to take feedback form, both, verbal and non-verbal forms. If you are able to take correct feedback you can successful adapt your message to match with the information requirements of your customers.

In this unit all communication related principles were discussed to prepare you to gain the maximum from the next two units, which are on sales negotiations and sales presentations.



5.13 KEY WORDS

Non-verbal communication: All forms of communication, without the use of words, both written and spoken.

Kinesics: It is another word for body-language.

Paralanguage : It relates to voice modulation. Sometimes the way you speak a particular word, can affect its meaning

Good News v/s Bad News Message: Typically all messages can be divided into two categories, depending on their impact on the receiver

5.14 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Do you think setting objectives for any sales related communication task are important ? Why?
2. What do you understand from non-verbal communications. How does it help in sales interactions.
3. From the following letter of 'India Today' identify the four special characteristics of a sales letter.



**INDIA
TODAY**

Dear Friend,

When it comes to keeping an eye on the nation's pulse, no one does it better than INDIA TODAY. Providing you with news, views and analysis of issues ranging from national politics, sports and entertainment to human interest stories. INDIA TODAY has always given you journalism that is bold, incisive and credible. No wonder then, that INDIA TODAY is the most widely read news magazine in the country.

Now INDIA TODAY brings you the Super Subscription Offer.

Subscribe to INDIA TODAY for 5 years and get a pair of the original 24K gold bonded, impact resistant, distortion free Ray Ban Aviator sunglasses (Arista RB-3 model), absolutely free! Besides, of course, saving a hefty 31% on the cover price.

If you subscribe for 3 years, you get a set of three Parker Vector pens, crafted exclusively for INDIA TODAY subscribers, absolutely free in addition to saving 29% on the cover price.

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To subscribe to INDIA TODAY and get your free gift, simply complete the enclosed reply coupon and mail it with your remittance today. A prepaid business envelope has been provided for your convenience.

We look forward to welcoming you amidst our family of 33.43 lakh readers of INDIA TODAY.

Yours sincerely,



5.15 FURTHER READINGS

1. A. Pease, Body Language.(Londong, Sheldon Press, 1981).
2. Harta A. Murphy, Herbert W. Hidbrandt, Effective Business Conunications, (New York: McGraw Hill Inc., 1991).
3. Herschell Gorden Lewis, Sales letters that Sizzle, (Illinonis: NTC Business Books, 1995).