

Total Marks = 90

Q.2 (a) Business environment is complex as one may face a communication failure for the reasons which he or she has never thought of. Why is the business environment challenging? Why does it require deftness in communication skills? Are the questioned which can be answered by taking the following factors into account?

1. The Increase Value of Business information:

As competition for jobs, customers, and resources continues to grow, the importance of information continues to escalate as well. Even companies not associated with the so called Information Age often rely on knowledge workers: employees at all levels of an organisation who specializing in acquiring, processing, and communicating information.

Let us consider the following examples to get the idea of the value of information.

- (a) **Competitive insights:** The more a company knows about its competitors and their plans, the better its ability to adjust its own business plans.
- (b) **Customer needs:** Most companies invest significant time and money in the effort to understand the needs of their customers, and this information needs to be analysed and summarised in order to develop goods and services that better satisfy customer needs.
- (c) **Regulations and guidelines:** Today's business must understand and follow a wide range of government regulations and guidelines covering such areas as employment, environment, taxes, and accounting. In some fields like accounting and finance executives say that communication skills are more important than ever before because of increasing requirements of government reporting but also for the increase in interdepartmental collaboration.

Companies competitiveness highly relies on its employees ability to understand, analyse and communicate valuable information.

2. The Globalisation of Business and the increase in Workforce Diversity:

Today's businesses increasingly reach across international borders to market their products partners with businesses, employ workers and executives---- an effort known as globalisation.

The firms engaged in exports and imports and many multinational companies need to understand the culture of the places they are running their places. This requires extensive understanding of communication skills as its sphere is broaden and complex now.

Moreover, work force diversity is a consequence of globalisation which means there are many people working in the organisation who are different from each other culturally and lingually. More people with different culture, language, attitude and experiences requires more attention to communication.

3. The pervasiveness of Technology:

If someone lacks in the knowledge and skills required to use technology then he or she may not be able to communicate with his or her colleagues as they may be ahead of him or her with the use of modern technology for communication. Imagine someone who does not know computer at all and has to answers thousands of queries from the customers through e-mail. This may result in a communication failure or delay.

4. Organisational Structure:

If the organisation has tall structure then communication might flow slower from top to bottom or bottom to top. This leads at times communication break down or delay. Many organisations now paying attention to the flat organisational structure to have a smooth communication among the employees. Organisational structure sets up the pace of

communication and it plays complexity a vital role in the complexity communication.

5. **The growing Reliance on Teamwork:**

In today's competitive age businesses count on setting up teams to achieve goals. But the success of a team also counts on the communication skills of the team members. Teams with poor communication skills are likely to meet failures.

In a nut shell it can be said that communication at the work place is a challenge as it requires diversified interactions with masses or many individuals.

Q.2 (b) 1. Ethnocentrism:

It is a tendency to judge all other groups according to the standards, behaviours, and customs of one's own group. Given the automatic influence of one's own culture, when people compare their culture to others, they often conclude that their culture is superior. Businesspeople who take such a view are not likely to communicate successfully across culture.

2. **Stereotyping:**

Distorted views of other cultures or groups also result from stereotyping which means assigning a wide range of generalised attributes to an individual on the basis of membership in a particular culture or social group.

The negativity of ethnocentrism and stereotyping can be overcome by the following ways:

(a) Avoid Assumption:

Assuming that others will act the same way you do, use language and symbols the same way you do, or even operate from the same values and beliefs.

(b) Avoid judgements:

When people act differently, do not conclude that they are in error or that way is invalid or inferior.

(c) Acknowledge distinction:

Do not overlook the differences between another person's culture and one's. Realising the difference between other's culture and one's own can help to overcome ethnocentrism and stereotyping.

Q.3 (a) Verbal (Oral) Communication:

In any organization, as in everyday life, both formally and informally, we communicate more orally than in writing. It is primarily oral communication that builds up human relationships. It is the use of the gift of speech, or talking, that brings the members of a family, neighbours and friends, and likewise, colleagues in an organization together. Without oral communication any organization will become just lifeless. Its importance, therefore, cannot be overemphasized.

In a business organization there are ample opportunities for both formal and informal oral communication. But in fact, a lot more time is spent in informal oral communication. The simple reason is that all communication is essentially conversational in nature and has a social purpose. Whenever people get together there is bound to be face-to-face communication in which they will share all sorts of ideas, feelings, etc. The origin of the grapevine lies here.

Another very frequently used type of informal oral communication is called 'phatic

communication'. Generally, it is not regarded as important. But the fact is that it is very vital in establishing relationships. For example, by making comments on the weather or putting questions about the health of family one 'breaks the ice' and gets into a dialogue with the person before him. It is just a ritualized way of speaking in which what is said is not as important as the fact that it is said at all. This kind of dialogue generates warmth in relationship with friends or colleagues and promotes further communication by maintaining contact with the listener.

Side by side with, and in addition to, the informal oral communication, various kinds of formal oral communication take place in an organization. Very often people in business have to make formal presentations before a group that may be large or small. At other times they have to participate in meetings and group discussions. Time to time they have to appear for or conduct interviews. Most of the letters and report are largely dictated. All these are formal kinds of oral communication thrive together.

No oral communication can be effective without proper listening on the part; of the receiver of the message. Poor listening may defeat the very purpose of oral communication. It has been found by authorities on the subject that generally people retain only about one fourth of what they hear after two days. In this way listening becomes the weakest link in oral communication.

It is, therefore, very important to improve the ability to listen. It requires serious efforts on the part of the listener to absorb what he is being told. It is largely a matter of mental conditioning. We will listen carefully only if we want to listen. Mostly people become lazy, and listening requires serious work. We have to train ourselves to listen attentively. With an alert mind we have to learn to pay attention to spoken words.

Q.3 (b) Making requests for information, action, products, adjustments, or other matters is a routine part of business. Writing routine requests messages requires the following strategy:

1. State Your Request Up Front:

Begin routine requests by placing your request first; up front is where it stands out and gets the most attention. Of course, getting right to the point should not be interpreted as a licence to be abrupt or tactless. Following are the points one should consider while stating the request up front.

- (a) Pay attention to tone.** Even though a favourite response is expected, the tone of the initial request is important. Instead of demanding action, one should soften his or her request with words such as please and I would appreciate.
- (b) Assume that your audience will comply.** One does not need to demand the service impatiently rather the assumption that the reader would comply as the message is clearly understood would work better.
- (c) Be specific.** Stating things precisely and specifically saves time and efforts. It is advised by most of communication gurus that the message particularly routine requests should be verbose and concrete as nobody has time in the real business world to read and do what is not required.

2. Explain and Justify Your Request:

The best place to explain the request is body of the letter. The explanation should be smooth and outgrowth of the opening remarks. If possible reader benefit can also be included in some situations. Moreover, to make sure the reader does not miss out the required information one can use the body of his request to list a series of questions. The list of questions help the audience identify the information the writer needs. To

organise the message well, following points should be kept in mind.

- (a) Ask the most important question first
- (b) Ask only relevant question
- (c) Deal with only one topic per question

3. **Request Specific Action in a Courteous Close:**

The message should be closed with the following three basic elements:

- (a) A specific request
- (b) Information about how one can be reached
- (c) An expression of appreciation and goodwill

Q.4 (a) Focus on the Questioner

When someone poses a question, focus your attention on that individual. Pay attention to the questioner's body language and facial expression to help determine what the person really means. Nod your head to acknowledge the question; then repeat it aloud to confirm your understanding and to ensure that the entire audience has heard it. If the question is vague or confusing, ask for clarification; then give a simple, direct answer. If you're asked to choose between two alternatives, don't feel you must do so. Offer your own choice instead if it makes more sense.

Respond Appropriately

This might sound like obvious advice, but be sure to answer the question you're asked. Don't sidestep it, ignore it, laugh it off, or get so caught up in the situation that you forget to respond. Gauge the length of your response to the importance of the question, the status of the questioner, and the time you have left. If giving an adequate answer would take too long simply say, "I'm sorry, we don't have time to get into that issue right now, but if you'll see me after the presentation, I'll be happy to discuss it with you." If you don't know the answer, don't pretend that you do. Instead, say something like "I don't have those figures. I'll get them for you as quickly as possible". In some cases, you won't have time to answer every question that is asked; if possible, arrange another means to give people the information they need.

Maintain Control

Unlike the delivery phase of your presentation, you have less control over the proceedings during the question and answer session. However, you can help maintain control during this period by establishing some ground rules up front. Before you begin, announce a time limit or a question limit per person. Establishing limits will protect you from getting into a heated exchange with one member of the audience and from allowing one or two people to monopolize the question period. Give as many audience members as possible a chance to participate by calling on people from different parts of the room. If the same person keeps angling for attention, restate the question limit or say something like "Several other people have questions; I'll get back to you if time permits."

If audience members try to turn a question into an opportunity to make their own mini-presentations, remember that it's up to you to stay in control. You might ask people to identify themselves before they ask questions. People are more likely to behave themselves when everyone present knows their name. You might admit that you and the questioner have differing opinions and, before calling on someone else, offer to get back to the questioner once you've done more research. Or you might simply respond with a brief answer, avoiding a lengthy debate or additional questions. Finally, you might

thank the person for the comments and then remind everyone that you were looking for specific questions.

Survive the Hot Seat

If a question ever puts you on the hot seat, respond honestly, but remember to keep your cool. Look the person in the eye, answer the question as well as you can, and try not to show your feelings. Whatever the situation, avoid getting into a heated argument. Even if you win, you'll leave the audience feeling both uncomfortable about the situation and your ability to handle conflict. Recognize that questioners who challenge your ideas, logic, or facts may just be trying to push you into overreacting. Defuse hostility by paraphrasing the question and asking the questioner to confirm that you've understood it correctly. Break long, complicated questions into parts that you can answer simply. State your response accurately and factually; then move on to the next question. Avoid postures or gestures that might seem antagonistic. Maintain a businesslike tone of voice and a pleasant expression. Don't indulge in put-downs – they may backfire and make the audience more sympathetic to the questioner.

Encourage Questions

Although exactly the opposite of a noisy, confrontational audience, listeners who are deadly quiet can be just as uncomfortable. If there's a chance your audience will be too timid or too hostile to ask questions, consider arranging a few questions ahead of time with a cooperative member of the audience. If a friend or the meeting organizer gets the ball rolling, other people in the audience will probably join in. You might ask a question yourself: "Would you like to know more about..." If someone in the audience answers, act as if the question came from that person in the first place. When all else fails, say something like "I know from experience that questions are asked after the question period. So I'll be around afterward to talk."

Conclude Your Presentation

When the time allotted for your presentation is up, call a halt to the question-and-answer session, even if more people want to talk. Prepare the audience for the end by saying, "Our time is almost up. Let's have one more question." After you've made your reply, summarize the main idea of the presentation and thank people for their attention. Conclude the way you opened: by looking around the room and making eye contact. Then gather your notes and leave the podium, maintaining the same confident demeanour you've had from the beginning.

For a reminder of the steps to take in developing an oral presentation, refer to "Checklist: Developing Oral presentations."

Q.4 (b)

SAMPLE

(Assume Logo)

Adamjee College
B-77, 12th street North
Nazimabad, Karachi
Telephone:0092,021-34567

MEMO TO: Dean Imtiaz AKBAR

FROM: Ali Sarfaraz, President
Entrepreneurial Association of Adamjee College

DATE: January 3,2013

Subject: **Establishment of EAAC Scholarship**

The Entrepreneurial Association of Adamjee College (EAAC) shares your interest in increasing the number of scholarships available to business majors. Toward that end, we recently voted to establish an annual Rs.15000 scholarship for a junior or senior student majoring in entrepreneurship. To fund this scholarship we propose selling doughnuts and coffee in the main lobby from 7:30 to 10:30 daily. All of the profit will be embarked for the scholarship fund.

A secondary benefit of this project is that it will provide practical work experience for our club members. We will purchase our own supplies and equipment and keep our record. Not in use supplies and equipment will be stored in the office of Professor Ali Kamran, our sponsor. The Data Processing Management Association follows the similar procedure with its fund-raising project of selling computer disks in the main lobby.

We look forward to receiving your approval of this fund-raising project in time for us to begin in February. In addition to raising new scholarship money and providing work experience for our members, we will also be providing a convenient service for faculty, staff, and students.

Q.5 (a) Preparing for Meetings:

Careful preparation helps you avoid the two biggest meeting mistakes: (1) holding a meeting when a memo or other message would do the job or (2) holding a meeting without a specific goal in mind. Before you even begin preparing for a meeting, make sure it's truly necessary. Once you're sure, proceed with four preparation tasks:

- **Decide on your purpose.** Although many meetings combine purposes, most focus on one of two types: Informational meetings involve sharing information and perhaps coordinating action. Decision-making meetings involve persuasion, analysis, and problem solving. They often include a brainstorming session, followed by a debate on the alternatives. Moreover, decision-making meetings require that each participant be aware of the nature of the problem and the criteria for its solution. Whatever your purpose, make sure it is clear and clearly communicated to all participants.
- **Select participants for the meeting.** With a clear purpose in mind, it's easier to identify the right participants. If the session is purely informational and one person will be most of the talking, you can invite a large group. For problem-solving and decision-making meetings, invite only those people who are in a direct position to help the meeting reach its objective. The more participants, the more comments and confusion you're likely to get, and the longer the meeting will take. However, make sure you invite all the key decision makers, or your meeting will fail to satisfy its purpose.
- **Choose the time and the facility.** For working sessions, morning meetings are usually more productive than afternoon sessions. Also, consider the seating arrangements: Are rows of chairs suitable, or do you need a conference table or some other setting? Plus, give some attention to details such as room temperature, lighting, ventilation, acoustics, and refreshments; any of these seemingly minor details can make or break a meeting.
- **Set the agenda.** The success of any meeting depends on the preparation of the participants. Distribute a carefully written agenda to participants, giving them enough time to prepare as needed. A typical agenda format may seem overly formal, but it will help you start on time and stay on track. A productive agenda answers three key questions: (1) What do we need to do in this meeting to accomplish our goals? (2) What issues will be of greatest importance to all participants? (3) What information must be available in order to discuss these issues? In addition to improving productivity, this level of agenda detail shows

respect for participants and the other demands on their time.

Everyone in a meeting shares the responsibility for keeping the meeting productive and making it successful. To ensure productive meetings, be sure to do the following:

- **Keep the discussion on track.** A good meeting draws out the best ideas and information the group has to offer. Good leaders guide, mediate, probe, stimulate, and summarize as the situation demands.
- **Follow agreed-upon rules.** Business meetings run the gamut from informal to extremely formal, complete with detailed rules for speaking, proposing new items to discuss, voting on proposals, and so on. The larger the meeting, the more formal you'll need to be to maintain order. Formal meetings use parliamentary procedure, a time-tested method for planning and running effective meetings. The best-known guide to this procedure is Robert's Rules of Order.
- **Encourage participation.** On occasion, some participants will be too quiet and other too talkative. The quiet participants may be shy, they may be expressing disagreement or resistance, or they may be working on unrelated tasks. Draw them out by asking for their input on issues that pertain to them. For the overly talkative, simply say that time is limited and others need to be heard from.
- **Participate actively.** If you're a meeting participant, try to contribute to both the subject of the meeting and the smooth interaction of the participants. Use your listening skills and powers of observation to size up the interpersonal dynamics of the people, then adapt your behaviour to help the group achieve its goals. Speak up if you have something useful to say, but don't monopolize the discussion or talk simply to bring attention to yourself.
- **Close effectively.** At the conclusion of the meeting, verify that the objectives have been met; if they have not, arrange for follow-up work as needed. Make sure all participant agree on the outcome and give people a chance to clear up any misunderstandings.

Q.5 (b)

Sample Letter of Resignation

B-35 Block L, 18th Lane
North Nazimabad Karachi Pakistan
Tel.: (021) 3456678

23rd March 2013
Vinayak Nair
Director Accounts Department
Ali & Co
456 Alcott Road

Dear Mr. Vinayak Nair:

Working in Ali & Co has been a wonderful experience as you and other colleagues have always been a great help and support these past five years. You have given me every chance to excel and develop myself as a professional engineer.

It has always been my aspiration to work in the textile industry as I told you when we first met for the interview. As I have been offered a job of my choice with better fringe benefits like free accommodation and children's education, I am submitting my resignation. I will miss my friends and colleagues at Ali & Co, but I want to take advantage of this offer.

I would like to terminate my work here a month from today and would not mind to train a replacement if you want me to do so during my stay.

Yours Sincerely,

Assistant Manager
Manufacturing Department
Kamran Ali

Q.6 (a) Audience responses to your messages depend heavily on your credibility, a measure of your believability based on how reliable you are and how much trust you evoke in others. With audiences who already know you, you've already established some degree of credibility, based on past communication efforts. As long as you haven't let people down in the past, they are inclined to accept each new message from you. However, with audiences who don't know you, you need to establish credibility before they'll accept or perhaps even pay attention to your messages. To build, maintain, or repair your credibility, emphasize the following characteristics:

- **Honesty.** Demonstrating honesty and integrity will earn you the respect of your audiences, even if they don't always agree with or welcome your messages.
- **Objectively.** Show that you can distance yourself from emotional situations and look at all sides of an issue.
- **Awareness of audience needs.** Let your audiences know that you understand what's important to them.
- **Credentials, knowledge, and expertise.** Audiences need to know that you have whatever it takes to back up your message, whether it's education, professional certification, special training, past successes, or simply the fact that you've done your research.
- **Endorsements.** An endorsement is a statement on your behalf by someone who is accepted by your audience as an expert. If your audiences don't know anything about you, try to get assistance from someone they do know and trust.
- **Performance.** Demonstrating impressive communication skills is not enough; people need to know they can count on you to get the job done.
- **Sincerity.** When you offer praise, don't use hyperbole, such as "you are the most fantastic employee I could ever imagine." Instead, point out specific qualities that warrant praise.

In addition, audiences need to know that you believe in yourself and your message. If you lack faith in yourself, you're likely to communicate an uncertain attitude that undermines your credibility. In contrast, if you are convinced that message is sound, you can state your case with authority so that your audience has no doubts. Try to avoid phrases such as if, hope, and trust, which can drain the audience's confidence in your message.

Q.6 (b) Prefatory parts of a proposal different from a report:

Formal proposal contains the cover, title fly, title page, table of contents and list of illustration as in other formal reports. However, it also includes the copy of RFP the synopsis or executive summary, and the letter of transmittal.

(a) Copy of the RFP (Request for proposal):

RFPs usually have specific instructions for referring to the RFP itself in the proposal because the organisations that issue RFPs need a methodical way to track all their active RFPs and the incoming responses. Some organisations require that you include a copy of the entire RFP in your proposal; others simply want you to refer to the RFP by name or number or perhaps include just the introductory section of the RFP.

(b) Synopsis or Executive Summary:

We may include a synopsis or an executive summary for the reader's convenience but when the proposal is quite long, it is often less useful in a formal proposal than it is in a formal report. If the proposal is unsolicited, the transmittal letter will already have caught the reader's interest, making a synopsis or executive summary redundant. On the other hand, if the proposal is solicited because the reader will already be committed to studying the proposal to find out how the writer intends to satisfy the terms of a contract. The introduction of a solicited proposal would provide an adequate preview of the content.

(c) Letter of Transmittal:

The way the letter of transmittal is handled depends on whether the proposal is solicited or unsolicited. If the proposal is solicited, approach the transmittal letter as a positive message. If the proposal is unsolicited approach the transmittal letter as a persuasive message. The letter must persuade the reader that you have something worthwhile to offer.

Q.7 (a) Some common problems:

- Frequent job changes
- Gaps in work history
- Inexperience
- Over qualification
- Long-term employment with one company
- Job termination for cause
- Criminal record

(b) Report Writing:

Many reports are written in business. They are a very important method of gaining and giving information. Although many reports are presented orally, for example at a meeting, reports are usually presented in writing.

Formal reports are usually written by a committee or group after fairly detailed investigation or research. They are often presented under the following prescribed series of headings.

Note: No fixed answer to this question can be framed. Various examinees would treat the task differently.

THE END