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ਪਟਿਆਲਾ

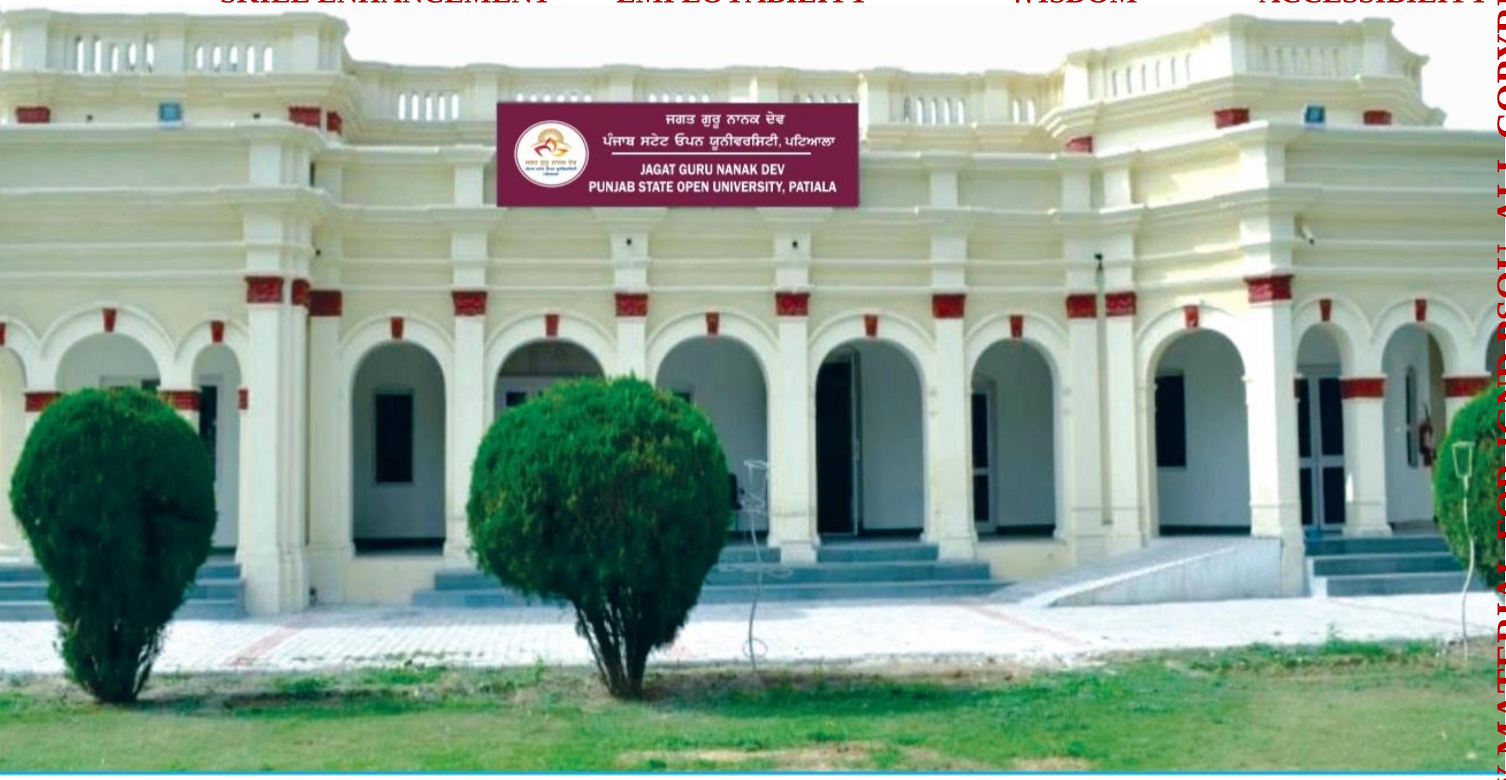
JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV
PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

(Established by Act No. 19 of 2019 of the Legislature of State of Punjab)

The Motto of the University

(SEWA)

SKILL ENHANCEMENT EMPLOYABILITY WISDOM ACCESSIBILITY



BUSINESS ETIQUETTE AND PROFESSIONALISM

BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

(CBEP1)

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PREFACE

Jagat Guru Nanak Dev Punjab State Open University, Patiala was established in December 2019 by Act 19 of the Legislature of State of Punjab. It is the first and only Open Universit of the State, entrusted with the responsibility of making higher education accessible to all especially to those sections of society who do not have the means, time or opportunity to pursue regular education.

In keeping with the nature of an Open University, this University provides a flexible education system to suit every need. The time given to complete a programme is double the duration of a regular mode programme. Well-designed study material has been prepared in consultation with experts in their respective fields.

The University offers programmes which have been designed to provide relevant, skill-based and employability-enhancing education. The study material provided in this booklet is self-instructional, with self-assessment exercises, and recommendations for further readings. The syllabus has been divided in sections, and provided as units for simplification.

The Learner Support Centres/Study Centres are located in the Government and Government aided colleges of Punjab, to enable students to make use of reading facilities, and for curriculum-based counseling and practicals. We, at the University, welcome you to be a part of this institution of knowledge.

Dean Academic Affairs

Content

UNIT - 1 COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE

STRUCTURE

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this , students will be able to

- Define the concept of Etiquette
- Understand the significance of communication for a social gathering
- Learning social and Business etiquette's
- Explain the significance of communication

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Etiquettes is a set of guidelines that, when followed properly, creates a positive impression in the minds of the people you interact with. In addition to that, etiquettes also make a person behave in a professional manner and respond to situations in the most appropriate manner possible.

The word “etiquette” comes from the old French term estiquette which meant “ticket, label”. This development comes from the then-common practice of carrying cards printed with instructions on how to maintain proper behavior in courts. Later, the rich and elite decided to use this method.

Instead of sending an invitation card which just mentioned the date and timing of the party, they started adding additional information on the different courses, a map of the mansion, where to park their carriages, etc. Others followed suit and soon public houses carried a set of instructions on their entrance doors on what conduct they expect their visitors to follow.

Later the pronunciation of the word changed from estiquette to etiquette, which was the result of vowel-corruption. Because the usage of this word was not limited to cards anymore, and a few standards that were hitherto followed only in elite households had now become part of everyday life, “etiquette” gradually changed to accommodate represent the term “prescribed behavior”.

Etiquette vs. Manners vs. Courtesy

Because it’s used interchangeably in conversations, many people tend to do mistakes between the usage of words “etiquette”, “manners”, and “courtesy”. Let’s find out what they mean −

Courtesy

Courtesy is the act of being polite and doing what the person thinks is the right thing at the given time. Earlier, the act of offering one's seat to a lady passenger was considered a courtesy, however these stances undergo change with the advancing of time. A modern day example of courteous behavior would be keeping the door of an automatic-operated lift open for a colleague to be able to walk inside the lift.

Etiquette

It is the code of conduct that people in different social circles are expected to adhere to. It's a set of instructions that might not be written out, but are paid equal importance to written rules. Etiquette specifies how a person should behave in a given circle so as to leave a positive impression on everyone present.

Manners

Manners is a neutral word, which means it in itself means only "actions". That's the reason we use the words "good, bad" before them to give them a direction. So when you get irritated by someone being impolite and angrily ask him "Don't you have any manners!" and he replied "Yes", he could actually be right.

Everyone has manners, but depending on the upbringing, environment, and education, he could have either good manners or bad ones. In short, etiquette teaches us how we should behave, and manners are how we ultimately do.

1.2 MEANING AND SCOPE

Etiquette is defined as formal rules and manners that are considered sacred and acceptable in society. These have been established by convention for a very long time and are followed diligently in both professional and social settings.

If you are looking for an answer to what is etiquette, then let me tell you that it refers to the guiding principle that dictates what our behavior and manners should be in society. It proves an asset because it tells you in explicit terms about what it considers to be logical and rational. It is the etiquette that draws a different line between people with good manners and people who behave irresponsibly everywhere.

Etiquette and manners go hand in hand. You will also find several etiquette books like etiquette for a lady, etiquette for kids, list of manners and etiquette, the importance of etiquette, and etiquette rules to help you in your task of learning things related to it.

Some of the important types of etiquettes in society are as follows-

1. Social etiquette

One of the most important etiquettes is social etiquette as it informs an individual about the norms and behavior that society considers acceptable

2. Meeting etiquette

This type of etiquette informs individuals about the styles one should give preference to while attending meetings, seminars, and events.

3. Wedding etiquette

Yes, there are wedding etiquettes in place that inform individuals that one should not be late, should behave sensibly, and do not drink too much at weddings.

4. Corporate etiquette

This type of etiquette informs individuals about how an individual should behave at his workplace and maintain dignity.

5. Bathroom etiquette

This type of etiquette refers to the rules that an individual should follow if he is using public or office toilets.

6. Business etiquette

This type of etiquette acts as a guiding force to the professionals and helps them in conducting business deals in an ethical and effective manner

7. Eating etiquette

This type of etiquette informs individuals about the rules and regulations regarding their eating habits.

Do not speak when the mouth is full, thank the person serving your food, do not leave the table until everyone has finished eating, etc. are some important eating etiquettes

8. Telephone etiquette

This type of etiquette informs individuals about how they should behave on the telephone. How to interact with others, not putting someone on hold for a long time, greeting the other person, and keeping your tone and pitch at the perfect level are basic telephone etiquettes one should always follow

Basic rules of etiquette in family

- Some of the basic rules of etiquette in the family are as follows
- Respect the belongings of each other
- Use polite language at all times
- Make use of words like thank you, please, sorry liberally.
- Respect everyone’s personal space
- Pick up your things. Do not wait for others to do so
- Be on time for meals especially if everyone is eating at the same table
- Do not talk with your mouth full
- Do not interrupt someone when he is speaking
- Put the onus on listening
- Do not yell at each other
- Do not call names in front of children as they will easily pick up the bad language
- Be cautious of comments and images on social media platforms primarily related to your children

Some of the benefits of using the correct etiquette are as follows-

It is proper etiquette that helps to create the first impression on others. The first few seconds when you are waiting to be introduced, and your smile is cordial and warm, and later when your handshake is firm are basic etiquette and manners that can have a positive impact on others.

Following proper business etiquettes in your professional life will enhance your status at the workplace. People will consider you more capable, intelligent, and professional than the others

The benefit of etiquette is that it can boost self-confidence and self-esteem

Etiquette helps in making people around you comfortable. This proves beneficial as it helps in creating strong relationships and friendship

It is the etiquette that urges you to be kind to others. This boosts your satisfaction level as well as happiness

People who are well mannered and follow proper etiquette rules often stand out even in the crowd. Their solid foundation provides more opportunities for growth compared to people who are lagging in social etiquettes

Using proper etiquette ensures a clear and better level of communication between people as it breaks unnecessary barriers that are standing in the way of open communication

Following proper rules of social etiquette in any given situation provides a sense of personal security

Basic etiquettes give us a fair idea about how a culture functions. If you are traveling to new places, it will prove beneficial as basic rules are generally the same in almost all the places

Etiquettes help the children to learn about rules and regulations from an early age. This proves beneficial when they go to school, college and even when they enter the professional world

Better etiquettes result in positive attention from others

The term etiquette is such a small word but encompasses a whole lot of roles and responsibilities that have become a guiding force in society. It is undoubtedly clear that the term means following a moral code of conduct, showing respect to others, giving personal space, putting them at ease with your presence, showing kindness, being courteous, and dealing with ethics and honor in every situation.

Practice etiquette so that it becomes ingrained, and you can automatically display all the good behavior that society demands from its occupants.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF ETIQUETTE

Many people correlate etiquette to an underlying set of rules or laws for various occasions, formal events, or everyday life. This might include using the proper fork, knowing when to applaud, or how to shake hands.

Merriam-Webster defines etiquette as, "…the conduct or procedure required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life."

Understanding conventions can help people avoid embarrassing situations. It's also a fundamental part of etiquette.

But there's more to it than knowing the correct way to sit at a formal function.

It really comes down to relationships between people.

Good manners and proper etiquette include age-old sentiments like the Golden Rule and putting others before yourself. It means being honest, trustworthy, and having the ability to put other people at ease. It also means exhibiting kindness and courtesy when working with others.

Emily Post's great-grandson, Peter Post, now runs the Emily Post Institute, Inc. He is quoted in TribLive saying, "The word ‘proper' carries the kind of negative connotation about what etiquette really is; that it's about strict, formal rules of conduct. What etiquette helps you do is built strong relationships. Business is built on relationships - the success you are going to have in your business life is going to be, in large measure, your ability to build relationships with colleagues, customers, bosses."

Etiquette changes over time and across cultures, but the root of it is knowing how to work with other people and having the ability to build relationships.

HOW ETIQUETTE IS CHANGING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The digital age has changed the landscape of business, personal life, and social life. It's no wonder that it has also had a great effect on etiquette.

In some cases, these changes have come on quickly leaving some wondering what the proper etiquette is for technology.

Even more complicated, there are times when a generation gap affects technology etiquette. Younger generations are less likely to listen to voicemails, and may even find them annoying and inconvenient.

Generation Z often abandons text messaging for messaging apps like Snapchat.

Beyond generational differences, there are also questions about the correct way to use technology in the workplace. Those who work in corporations may not know what the proper etiquette for cell phones in the office. Are they appropriate for meetings? Should they be left at their desks, or is it enough to place them face down at a meeting table?

Technology usually ushers in new changes for etiquette. For instance, when Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, it took a while to choose the correct greeting. Bell wanted to use the word "Ahoy!" Even, "What is wanted?" was in the running. "Hello," was the word that was finally chosen.

Each major technological change brings with it new rules. If you're wondering how to navigate this new digital age, here are some specific etiquettes related to technology.

- ✓ Where you should not use your cellular device:
- ✓ When driving for safety reasons.
- ✓ In the check out line because it slows down the flow and comes across as rude when the cashier can see you're distracted.
- ✓ It may come across as rude to have your cell phone out during class.
- ✓ During religious services of any kind including funerals and weddings.
- ✓ When with a client
- ✓ At a nice restaurant.
- ✓ At a dinner party.
- ✓ Cell phones can be used at meetings if they're relevant to the meeting. Otherwise, they should be left behind or silenced.
- ✓ When you're having a personal conversation with someone.
- ✓ As a general rule, try to avoid frequently checking your phone.

How to use etiquette on social media:

Don't use social media to air personal disputes or conversations. Those should be reserved for private messaging.

Don't use social media for personal issues if you're friends with acquaintances or coworkers.

Don't tag or post pictures of friends or acquaintances that are not flattering.

Avoid being overreactive when people post things on social media. It's easy to misinterpret someone else's motivation especially if you don't know them well.

Try to avoid posting offensive things on your social media. Represent yourself well. Remember that employers and educational institutes often use social media to vet people.

Text or call close friends on their birthday instead of wishing them a happy birthday on social media.

WHAT ARE SOME BASIC ETIQUETTES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION?

Good communication is a key component to a successful life and proper etiquette can play a huge part in effective communication. Whether you're talking to a friend, speaking in class, trying to land a job at an interview, or in giving a presentation in the workplace, knowing the right way to communicate with others is essential.

Here are some helpful etiquette’s to help you communicate effectively.

LISTEN TO THE PERSON YOU'RE COMMUNICATING WITH

Taking the time to listen to others sounds easy, but it's too often overlooked. This simple courteous act can go a long way in making others feel important.

If you want to be a good listener, put your phone away. Set aside distractions and listen intently. Make eye contact during the conversation so they know you're paying attention.

It's tempting to interrupt others when something they say sparks your interest. You may feel like interjecting a similar story or thought. However, this often makes people feel like you don't really care what they're saying. It gives the impression that you're more interested in what you have to say than what they have to say. Instead, wait until they're done talking before you share your thoughts.

Learning how to listen well can improve both work-related relationships and personal ones. People feel much more at ease when they feel heard, no matter what the context.

THINK ABOUT YOUR TONE

Communication is often about much about the way you say things, not just the words you use. Your tone effects the way your words are perceived.

For instance, you can say, "I love you!" in a romantic way. Or, you can say, "I really love you," in a sarcastic way with the opposite meaning.

A person can say, "I hate you," affectionately. They can also bitterly communicate, "I can't wait to see you again!"

We may think that we can hide our tone behind sweet words, but most people are keen to pick up our real meaning. When speaking, consider the way you're coming across.

Are you saying one thing, but really meaning another? Are you being passive-aggressive or misrepresenting your real intentions?

A tone of voice not only expresses meaning to others, but it also creates interest. Everyone is bored when someone gives a monotone speech. The tone and variation of a person's voice can make them sound strong, emphasize emotion, and impress urgency. It can inspire and motivate people.

A person's tone can also soothe and comfort someone in pain. The way someone speaks can make another person feel cared for and at ease. When communicating effectively, make sure that your tone matches your intent. Also, be sure to be courteous and thoughtful when you speak. Choose your words and the way you express them carefully.

USE EMPATHY AND THINK ABOUT OTHERS BEFORE YOU SPEAK

When we're frustrated or stressed, it's easy to think inwardly. We sometimes minimize other people's needs, become irritable, or blow up at friends or colleagues.

Effective and courteous communication starts with using empathy and thinking about the needs of others. Even if you're communicating a need of your own, consider how it will come across to someone else when you bring it up.

For example, you can kindly ask for your assistant to get you a cup of coffee, or you can lash out angrily because it isn't already on your desk.

In both instances, you'll probably get your coffee, but the first method is more effective in the long run. Your assistant may follow your orders when you're angry, but they're probably not going to want to work with someone long term who is harsh and unreasonable.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE THE PHONE

Compared to using empathy, dialing a phone number might not seem like a big deal, but choosing to call someone might save you both time and energy.

Text messaging, messaging apps, email, and social media are all great ways to communicate. That said, there are times when it's difficult to convey meaning through text.

If you're struggling to understand someone's intent, or if you have to discuss something complicated, it can be very helpful to pick up the phone. In some cases, a series of emails or texts can be cleared up with a five-minute phone conversation.

HOW TO HAVE PROPER ETIQUETTE WHEREVER YOU GO

The truth is you may not always have perfect etiquette. There will be certain situations where you're out of our element. You may not always know the exact rules or conventions. That doesn't mean that you can't still be courteous, kind, and mannerly. Peggy Post, author, and spokesperson for the Emily Post Institute explains, "Manners are a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others. If you have that awareness, you have good manners, no matter what fork you use."

1.4 ADVANTAGES OF ETIQUETTE

The actions we make, the thoughts we possess in our mind and the consequences we think of getting the result not only effects ourselves but it also affects the one who stays around us for a longer period of time.

One of the most important things which reflect one's personality is the ethics that he or she possess. As we hear the term 'Ethics' different meanings start bursting up in our mind, but let us see the scientific meaning of ethics.

As per the ethics definition, ethics are a general set of rules that are important to be followed, to be a part of society. Moreover, it guides one to live in the right way in society. These certain rules are common worldwide. These ethical principles are inherited as well as are learned by the individual from their family's ways of living.

Every single individual possesses the same ethics and ethical behavior in different ways as the culture from which they are born and brought up are different.

Whenever we talk about the behavior of a person one of the most important things is ethics, whether the person reflects his ethics at home or office or in a professional environment, he should live with setting some set of rules, which make him acceptable in the society. There are some important ethical terms which matter the most in a professional environment. Let us see those elements:

Definition of Workplace Ethics:

Workplace ethics are nothing but the rules and procedures that should be carried out in an office by the employer and the employees to maintain a professional company culture and to build a better relationship with their customers by providing better services.

Workplace ethics plays an important role in company growth and development.

Examples of Workplace Ethics:

Secular values are the basis from where the ethics of the workplace have been derived from. Some of them are,

1. Loyalty
2. Comradery
3. Citizenship
4. Trustworthiness
5. Integrity
6. Respect
7. Caring
8. Fairness
9. Responsibility
10. Accountability

Most Important Ethical Terms and Principles:

1. Values:

The values of a person can be defined as the acts and actions which we make in our daily life. The true values of a person are devotion, respect, hard work and love. These acts of values make a person more valuable.

These values tell more about a person's behavior and responsive qualities which he can possess during work.

2. Morals:

Morals are the certain duties which he needs to do for the betterment of society. Moreover, these are certain duties which make society work in a synchronized manner. These morals apply to every single human being of the society and they can't be judged in a specific manner, because the things in moral are either right or wrong.

3. Integrity:

Integrity means to be always honest and sincere under any circumstances. When any individual shows integrity in a professional environment and his work, it means that the person can be trusted as well as he is an honest man to rely on. The person who is honest and sincere always sustains for a longer duration in the company as compared to others.

4. Character:

The character is one of the most important ethics which in short describes a person. It tells about your behavior towards others and your reactions towards the different situations. A bad thinking mind can destroy your character and a positive attitude and healthy mind always keep you with a good character.

5. Laws:

These are certain rules and regulation fixed by you yourself. These rules define you and put a limit to events that are dangerous for your lifestyle. A man with rules always shapes up in the laws of the company and work accordingly in the best way possible, and a man with no rules always lands up in troubles. These laws give us the ability to differentiate between right and wrong.

6. Dedication:

This is also a person defining ethic. The stronger dedication in work, the greater the output and results.

Dedication in work makes a man stronger for tough situations and he also becomes a key player in motivating the others during the hard times.

7. Accountability of responsibility:

The more a person is responsible in nature, the more efficiently and responsibly he will do the given task. Responsibility towards everything such as parents, family, society, nature, works, office, etc are certain things which not only should be kept in mind but also these must be followed by every human being for a healthier environment.

These were the 7 ethical principals which matter the most in a professional environment and these ethics must be present in every human being so that he leads towards a successful and healthier life. Ethical behavior in the workplace helps us to remain healthy. Yes healthy, but healthy not only means to remain healthy physically but it gives you the mental peace of mind.

This experience is the most beautiful experience of life, when you don't have any regrets for anything and daily you are appreciated for who you are, gives your mind so much satisfaction and peace that in difficult situations when others can't think of any solution, you are the only one thinking calmly and quietly and finally coming up with the solution. This is the strength of the stable inner mind of an individual. Moreover, there are some professional benefits which can be gained by professional ethics; let us see some of the benefits below.

Benefits of Ethics in the Workplace:

The following mentioned are few advantages of ethics in the workplace.

1. Asset Protection and Assurance:

When your workers possess an ethical working environment and ethical behavior in the workplace, your companies maintenance cost decreases to a remarkable extent because they are well aware of their duties and responsibilities towards the company.

They also realize that they should not do any damage to any of the machines and equipment are given to them as they are very valuable for the company and doing damage to these things will be a wrong act, so automatically things will be taken care of and everything will work systematically.

2. Productivity will increase:

When the working staff and the workers value the work given to them and then they will do all the given work in time and achieve their set targets, this will greatly affect the sales and the productivity of the company.

Due to this, it is assured that you will have a group of people who will sail your business even in the worst of the downfall of the market, and keep the growth of the company and business consistent.

3. Team Work will develop:

When all the workers do their jobs in a responsible way, then a time comes when they have achieved the target way before the given deadline, then a question arises What Next? So the situation automatically bonds up all the individuals into a team.

These individuals now work as a team and work in the benefit of the company for which they will be getting or achieving their incentives. This mutual understanding of the employees is a positive signal that the company will sustain for a very long period in the variable market conditions.

4. Public Image and Brand Value Increases:

Yes if all the members of the company are dedicated to work as well as figure out there values and responsibility towards the environment, then it is for sure that the type of cleanliness and the disposal of the waste product of the company will be unbeatable in the market, hence resulting in attracting a bigger customer base due to the clean and quality of the services or products.

Moreover, an increase in the public image and an increase in the customer base is directly proportional to an increase in brand value. In simpler words when you gain popularity amongst your customers you start to develop your company into a brand.

5. Adaptive to changes:

Workers with professional ethics in the workplace are definitely the master key to the lock of success. The team of understanding, trustworthy, reliable, motivate, concern and responsible people will defiantly adapt themselves into any kind of position and work they are filled with.

Moreover, in general, it has been seen worldwide that in the digressive market conditions, if the company asks for any changes in the production or changes in the kind of work then the workers oppose.

In some situations, the company is left empty-handed falling short of workers as they leave the company due to changes, but things are just opposite when you have a trustworthy and responsible bunch of people as they themselves demand changes according to the companies situation and let the company run even in the hard market situations.

6. Decision making and implementing is always easy:

Whenever there is a need to take a big decision then the best one made is by the advice of the employees of the company, and what will be better than every single employ respecting the decision and supporting the company to go ahead with their decision.

This is the power of ethics in the employers who respect the decision of the company and let it go along with the flow. This is very rare in the big companies but where this scene happens; the company turns big brands over the night.

7. Trouble-free working environment:

Generally, where everyone is unknown and moreover no one wants to know each other there are higher chances of great trouble and where there is a friendly, respectful and great workplace or environment between the employees there are fewer chances of the least troubles from the employees end.

If in case, a situation arises where there is some little misunderstanding between the employees, it gets solved within them due to a better and strong understanding between all the employees. Even the management does not have to bother about those small little things as they know that the employees will take better care of themselves.

8. There is no one left negative:

When people are detached from one another and someone gets negative regarding the companies' work then it has been seen that from that single negative employee many are affected.

Thus there is a sudden decline in the working of the employees, but when everything is good to go and everyone is concerned about one another then things become systematic and in case if someone gets negative, the positive and supportive environment works as a boost up for the person and again he/she starts working to their best.

9. Less Legal Issues:

When everything is systematic and functional and in addition your workers are cooperative and understanding then you won't be facing any problems or legal obligations from the employee's end, because all the workers are treated equally and all are well known with their duties which the job requires from them.

When everything is managed and systematic then all the paperwork and the legal formalities are the primary things which are considered the most, so there is no question of any legal issues.

10. The company will Touch New level of Success:

When everything is so managed and systematic along with the understanding of the employees because of their strong ethics, the company will surely touch new heights of success and even the growth of your business will be assured.

When your employees become experts in their respective works and respective fields, then their dedication and will, to do the work will show true colors and give more fruitful results.

Workplace Ethical Laws in Business:

There are few Occupational Safety, Health Administration and anti-discrimination laws mandated by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. These laws help the employees to make sure that certain things are practiced completely unbiased, such as:

- Anti-discrimination policies
- Anti-harassment policies
- Policies for interactions with clients
- Safety policies

Examples of Workplace Ethics Violations:

Usually, violations of workplace ethics in companies are not tolerated. Strict actions are taken depending upon the level of violation done. It is better to know, understand and follow ethics as it helps you build a professional value in you.

Examples of ethical violations that can occur in the workplace include:

- Asking a candidate whether she has children or no is the clear violation of ethics

- Discrimination of clients when quoting the price for a service is a violation
- The supervisor not taking any safety measures for their employees when doing the dangerous task
- An employee taking a step ahead for lying, making decisions even if he is not responsible for it.
- Spreading rumors about co-workers
- Not providing exact updates to the supervisor
- Not helping out a colleague who has experienced sexual abuse at the workplace, even after being a direct witness

How to Teach Workplace Ethics?

Most of the companies include the rules and regulations the employee should follow, which must be relating to the ethics of the workplace in the employee handbook.

Usually, all these terms are not discussed during the interviews or hiring process. It is only introduced after the employee joins the company. The organization's ethical standard levels play an important role in its work culture.

Teaching workplace ethics must be mandatory especially to the employees who are new like freshers to the company culture. In most of the organizations, new employees undergo workplace ethics training to make them understand the importance and advantages of it.

Effective ways to teach workplace ethics :

1. Role-playing complex ethical situations
2. Discussions about workplace ethics
3. Creating ethical dilemmas

So, these were some of the importance of ethics in the workplace. Truly ethics play a vital role in a person's life, it decides all the characteristics that you will possess under different circumstances, moreover all the emotions, vision of your life, way of living, struggle, happiness, desires are greatly influenced by the type of ethics you have learned from, which moreover makes you a part of a society and people judge you from the ethics you possess in the society.

The more you take a hold on your ethics, the more stable and perfect you will become in your lifestyle. Ethic not only improves the way of our living but it also sets up a defined path which we can follow by following our ethics, and which will be finally leading you towards a final destination. The more you improve and travel on the perfect path, the more successful your achievements will be.

1.5 SOCIAL ETIQUETTES

When it comes to social etiquette, a lot of people tend to forget the basic rules. Sure, almost everyone knows to say "thank you" or "goodbye", but good social manners are more than just a few kind words…

To be known as someone with good social etiquette, you need to learn a few important social etiquette rules that come in handy in various life situations. They will help you to look and act your best as a guest, in business meetings, when communicating with other people, and in various other situations.

What Is Social Etiquette?

Social etiquette is a set of rules, manners, and actions that help people to portray themselves as pleasant, polished, and professional human beings. People who are social etiquette experts know how to behave and look their best in various social situations.

Why Is Social Etiquette Important?

While social etiquette may seem like a ton of unnecessary rules to follow, it can actually be very beneficial for your life. Here’s why:

- Social etiquette shows you how to behave in different social settings, so you don’t have to question your own behavior.
- Social etiquette allows you to look like a kind and caring person – which is something everyone likes about others.
- Social etiquette helps people to interact with each other in a way that prevents unnecessary social confrontation or drama.
- Social etiquette makes it easier for you to build and maintain connections.
- Learning social etiquette can teach you how to communicate effectively and nicely.
- Social etiquette can help you to look more professional and make a good impression.

These are just a few of the social etiquette benefits. There are many more, but just these few can make a huge difference in your social life!

5 Basic Social Etiquette Rules

These social etiquette rules are very common around the world, and they’re something every person should know by default. However, before we dig into more specific social etiquette rules, let’s remind ourselves of the basics as well.

1. Always Say “Thank You” And “You Are Welcome”

If someone did something nice for you, always express it verbally. A simple “thank you” is generally enough and should never be forgotten. And if someone is thanking you, make sure to show that you accept their gratitude by saying “You’re welcome!”.

2. Hold The Door For A Person Behind

No matter if you’re a woman or a man, it’s a basic social etiquette rule to not slam the door at anyone who walks behind you. Be helpful – hold the door! This will show that you are considerate of others. Plus, Hodor approves it.

3. Cover Your Mouth When Sneezing Or Coughing

No one likes to be coughed on… So, when you feel that tickle coming in, follow the social etiquette by sneezing or coughing into your elbow.

4. Do Not Use Your Phone While Eating Or Communicating With Others

One of the modern social etiquette rules dictates us to not be looking at our phones all the time while with others. Admit it – it’s not pleasant to talk to someone who is interested in their phone more than you.

5. Be Punctual

That’s a simple social etiquette, but it can make or break a lot of social situations. Just don’t be late and don’t make others wait for you. Don’t come too early as well. It’s best to be there just on time, or just a little bit before it.

Social Etiquette For Business, Meetings And Work Situations

6. Remember the names of people you meet in business and professional meetings.

7. When shaking hands, keep gentle and kind eye contact. Do not hold the hand too hard or too gentle – strive for the optimal balance.

8. If you are bringing lunch to work, it’s best to choose food options that have less smell or have more pleasant odors. You know… Sometimes it’s really a good idea to rethink that tuna sandwich…

9. When you’re sick, be a good coworker and stay at home. Of course, sick days may have an impact on your performance report or your income, but getting your colleagues sick is something that can ruin your whole professional image.

10. Take your personal calls in a private place. Social etiquette suggests leaving your personal matters at home.
11. Always dress according to your company's dress code or protocol.
12. It's generally considered good social etiquette to bring a gift when meeting a new customer or potential lead.
13. Never listen to something on your computer or phone without putting your headphones on. A lot of people are sensitive to sounds, and it's a sign of bad social etiquette to make everyone listen to something they don't want.

Social Etiquette For Better Communication

14. Before addressing someone as "you", or even before using their first name, it's a good social etiquette to ask about it. Not everyone likes to be referred as "you" and some people have a specific preference when it comes to names.
15. If you have done something wrong, if you've hurt someone, be a good person and say "I'm sorry".
16. When in the discussion, small chat or conversation, allow people to end their thought. It's very rude to interrupt and speak over other people.
17. Visiting someone at their home? Before you decide that bringing kids or pets means no difference to the party host, it's best to call and ask them about it.
18. Always knock before entering the door!
19. Do not gossip and do not talk about someone behind their back.
20. This is an old tradition, and may not apply to all countries, but it's generally considered good social etiquette to bring a gift or food when visiting someone at their home.
21. Pay for yourself after a date to prevent the unnecessary feeling of owing someone.
22. Are you bringing someone to the party? Make sure to introduce this person to the people you know. This way, you're helping your guest to feel more included, and it can help your friends to get to know him or her faster.

Social Etiquette Outside Your Home

23. After using a shopping cart, follow good social etiquette by taking it back to its place.
24. If you're walking your dog, clean up after it.
25. When using gym equipment, make sure to wipe it after. No one likes to sit down on a sweaty seat!
26. When sleeping at someone's home, or when staying at a hotel, follow good social etiquette by leaving your room more or less tidy. Make your bed and do not leave your bathroom in terrible shape. After dinner, show you social etiquette skills by helping your host to clean up.
27. It's generally good social etiquette to tip! Most countries appreciate the tipping of waiters, bartenders, taxi drivers, barbers, and hotel staff.

Social Etiquette In Places With A Lot Of People

28. Give your seat to the elderly and pregnant women.
29. Do not point at things with your fingers, especially if there are a lot of people around. This may sound weird, but you can unintentionally point at a person and make them feel uncomfortable.
30. Just like pointing fingers at someone is not cool, starring at others is a sign of bad social etiquette as well.
31. Clean up after yourself everywhere you go. Do not leave a mess after yourself… It's unpleasant and can make you look bad in other people's eyes.

32. At dinner parties, lunch, brunch, and other meetings where people sit down to eat, always wait before everyone is served and ready to eat. Eating without waiting for others is a sign of bad social etiquette and it's best to avoid it at all costs.
33. Speaking of food, it's generally better to not pour drinks for yourself as well. In many countries, it is considered bad social etiquette – especially if you are a woman (sadly!).
34. Respect people and their personal space. Do not stand too close, and don't touch anyone without their permission.
35. In situations where there are people getting close to both sides of the door, remember that people who get out should go first. Step aside and let people come out freely – you can then come through the door without collision.
36. Before going to a party, or social event, make sure to find out what is the preferred dress code – and dress accordingly.
37. Before bringing pets to an event or someone's home, make sure to find out if it's allowed and if it's acceptable. There may be people who are allergic to pets, people who have a fear of dogs, children, or people sensitive to loud noises.
38. Going to the movies? Theater? Concerts? Galleries? Libraries? Turn off your phone sound.
39. Leave personal care at home, or at least at the bathroom. Good social etiquette suggests that it's not a good idea to clip your nails in public, to use lipstick at the table, or to pick your teeth at when there are people around.
Social Etiquette For Social Media And The Internet
40. Before tagging someone to a photo, or posting a picture with other people, make sure they are fine with you doing this. Not everyone likes to be tagged or portrayed in not-so-perfect pictures.
42. Before sending an e-mail, go through it one more time to make sure there are no grammar mistakes, and that your letter is professional or pleasant (if you're writing to your family and friends).
43. Think well before posting your own picture to social media as well. It's not like there is a particular social etiquette for these pictures… But you should always remember that your future employers, colleagues, and loved ones may find your old posts and even use them against you.
44. Skip comment section drama, and don't get involved in virtual conflicts. Just be a bigger person – respect yourself by not taking a part in it.
45. Do not have private conversations in virtual public. Use direct messaging systems instead of comment threads to communicate to a particular person.
Social Etiquette Is Like A Cherry On Your Personal Image Cake
Congratulations on reviewing all of these social etiquette rules! While they may seem like a lot, let's just admit that the way people see us is important. Your career, love life, and even self-confidence are deeply impacted by the way you present yourself. Learning social etiquette is not just something you do for your "public face"… A lot of these social etiquette rules are also a way to respect yourself. Because hey, if you know how to respect others, respecting yourself is just a piece of cake.

1.6 BUSINESS ETIQUETTES

Business etiquette is a set of social and professional rules that govern the way people interact with one another in business settings. Business or corporate etiquette is instrumental to helping advance in your career. It helps you show others the kind of values and belief systems you follow. Businesses are always on the lookout for individuals who can present themselves in a dignified manner because some may represent the organization externally. Whether it’s interacting with clients or convincing customers, your corporate etiquette can help you create a powerful impression. In addition to showing courtesy and respect to others, you demonstrate self-control and better emotional management.

Importance Of Business Etiquette

Business etiquette is important because it creates a mutually respectful atmosphere that helps you grow and enjoy work. Let’s look at some of the benefits of business etiquette in detail:

When You Treat Everybody With Respect, You Strengthen Your Interpersonal Relationships. People Find It Easier To Trust You Because You Value Their Opinions And Empathize With Them.

Good Business Etiquette Helps You Feel More Confident Because You Know What To Say And When. Customers And Clients Will Likely Feel More Secure Because You’re Poised And Exhibit Professionalism.

You’re Better Equipped To Avoid Misunderstanding And Conflict Because You Separate Your Emotions From Your Arguments. You Show Emotional Maturity And Look At Situations Objectively.

Business etiquette ensures that you put your best foot forward and create a positive atmosphere for yourself and everyone else. Learn how to win people over with Harappa Education’s Practicing Excellence course. The Four Selfs of Excellence will teach you how to present the best version of yourself to everyone. The 1% Rule framework will show you how even the smallest adjustments can lead to better performance. Make everybody feel comfortable in your presence and leave lasting impressions on others every time!

Business etiquette is a type of behavior that team members are expected to follow to uphold the company image and respect each other. While business culture has become more casual, it’s still critical to practice common courtesy. In this piece, we’ll explain what business etiquette is and some of the basic rules to familiarize yourself with.

People in the business world have different expectations about eye contact, body language, dress code, and dining etiquette, just to name a few. While many companies have shifted to a more casual culture, understanding proper business etiquette can go a long way. In this piece, we’ll explain what business etiquette is and some of the basic rules to familiarize yourself with.

The 5 basics of business etiquette

The basics of business etiquette vary from culture to culture, and it can be particularly intimidating to understand business etiquette if you're working for a company with a culture different from the one you grew up in. However, there are some universal constants that can help you stick to the status quo as you learn the particular group dynamics and team norms at your company.

These five important business courtesies can help you make a solid first impression and show respect for your team members.

1. Be on time

Whether you're attending an interview or daily standup meeting, being on time in a work environment shows that you respect everyone's schedule. If punctuality isn't something you've prioritized in the past, brush up on some time management tips to keep yourself organized and aware of your to-do list.

There are nuances to being on time—some cultures operate on a system of being slightly late to everything. But when in doubt, show up on time and adjust from there if necessary.

2. Recognize your team

Acknowledging others is proper business etiquette for both casual and formal work environments. When someone walks in the room at a business dinner or meeting, greet them and say hello appropriately—whether by shaking hands or following some other cultural custom.

The same rule applies if you work from home and attend daily Zoom meetings. You may not be required to get on camera in every business meeting, but speaking up and taking the time to recognize your team members can let everyone know you're listening and make others feel noticed.

3. Dress appropriately

Dressing appropriately is subjective and will depend on whether you work in an office or from home. Some companies that work in the office every day will expect everyone to dress in business casual attire because much of the work involves face time with stakeholders or clients. Other companies who work in a hybrid environment may encourage team members to dress casually in order to promote comfort and productivity.

If you are unsure about appropriate business attire, ask your manager or supervisor for tips. It's especially common to feel unsure if you just started a new job, but don't be afraid to send a quick email before your first day to get a feel of the office policy. Alternatively, think back to your interview and try to remember what everyone was wearing so you can dress accordingly.

4. Respect shared spaces

Even if you work remotely, you may go into the office on occasion or share virtual spaces with your team members. Office spaces you may share with team members include a kitchen, bathroom, printer and copy room, and lounge area. Virtual spaces you may share include Google Drive folders and project management software.

The way you treat shared spaces will reflect on you as a professional, so it's important that you label things correctly, stay organized, and respect others who also use these spaces. Business etiquette applies to shared spaces whether you're cleaning up after yourself physically or following company processes online.

5. Build emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, regulate, and understand emotions in yourself and in others. Effective emotional intelligence skills can help you empathize with team members and overcome challenges. While emotional intelligence isn't a direct rule of business etiquette, it will help you in the workplace, no matter what conflicts arise.

For example, imagine you're behind on work and your boss suddenly adds a large, time-sensitive project to your plate. With emotional intelligence skills, you can speak with your manager to understand the relative priority of the work. Since you're already behind on work, you can express your worry about becoming overworked and work with your manager to come up with a solution of which work you can deprioritize or delegate less important tasks.

Business etiquette for remote workers

With the transition to increasingly virtual teams, the definition and practice of business etiquette has changed. In person, you may need a politely firm handshake and the right attire, but when working remotely, you'll need to know the basics of email, phone, and video etiquette.

Email and team communication etiquette

Writing an email or communicating with your team through tools like Slack or Asana seems simple enough, but professional communication online differs from personal communication. Consider the tips below for proper email and online etiquette.

Proofread: Proofreading your emails is a hard rule of thumb that you shouldn't ignore. While your email or project management platform may have a built-in proofreading tool, you should also look over your email before sending it out, just in case

Be polite and professional: Even though you're not speaking face to face with your email recipient, your tone of voice will come through in your words. It's important to be polite and professional in your copy. For example, you can use upbeat phrases like: "I hope you... thanks for... just a friendly reminder... please let me know... looking forward to hearing from you."

Respond in a timely manner: Whenever another team member or client reaches out to you, they're doing so for a reason. Proper email and team communication etiquette means responding to people in a timely manner, even if that means setting up an automatic response for when you're out of the office. While you don't need to respond within minutes, aim to respond within one or two business days.

Keep it brief: Keeping your email copy brief can get your point across quickly and save time for your reader. When you hide the main objective of your message within a lengthy email, your reader may be less likely to respond in the way you hope for.

Remember that who you're writing to may make a difference in your email or online content. For example, if you're communicating with other team members through Asana and Slack, you can write in a more casual tone, whereas client emails should be more formal.

Phone etiquette

Business communication often occurs through phone calls. When speaking to clients or business partners on the phone, consider the following ways to uphold business etiquette.

Don't call unannounced: Everyone in the business world has a schedule to follow, whether they're working around a strict project timeline or trying to prioritize a heavy workload. When you need to talk to someone on the phone, send them an email first to schedule your call. Calling unannounced can be considered bad manners because the call recipient may be unprepared to talk to you.

Use reasonable tone and clarity: Your tone of voice is important on work phone calls. You'll need to keep a polite tone as you speak to team members or clients and be aware of your volume and clarity as well. If you speak too loudly or mumble on a professional call, your recipient may not receive your message the way you hope them to. Tone and communication can also vary based on culture, so keep cultural intelligence in mind when on the phone.

Deliver messages promptly: Just like with work emails, it's important to respond to work voicemails promptly. You may receive emails from team members or clients asking to schedule phone calls. Respond to these emails quickly with the best time you're available to talk on the phone.

Create a professional voicemail: Creating a professional voicemail for when you're unavailable is proper business etiquette because it lets people know who you are, what you do, and that you're unavailable. They can then leave you messages explaining why they're calling.

Video etiquette

Video is one of the most popular ways for remote workers to connect. With this method of communication, you get the benefit of speaking with many of your team members in real-time, which means there are some video etiquette basics you should know.

Mute yourself: One of the biggest issues team members face on video calls is background noise coming from those who aren't speaking. This issue has a simple fix: mute yourself when you aren't the speaker. Muting yourself will ensure your microphone is silent so others can have the full attention of the virtual room.

Engage with your body: When on a video call, others can see how you non-verbally interact with the speaker. If you're looking down or you're too relaxed in your seat, you may send the message that you're uninterested in the conversation. Sitting up straight, looking alert, and using nonverbal communication to show you're engaged lets the speaker know you're paying attention.

Don't interrupt: Interrupting someone on a video call can be especially disruptive. Technology can't always keep up with multiple people trying to speak on a video call, so interruptions can lead to glitches and confusion for everyone involved.

Dress appropriately: Video calls may only show your clothes from the waist up, but it's still important to dress appropriately together. Your attire for video calls should follow your company's dress code. Also consider your personal hygiene when on camera.

Working from home makes it less common that you'll interact with team members and clients in person, but don't forget that virtual interactions still leave lasting impressions. When in doubt, approach these interactions with the same business ettiquette and care as you would for an in-person conversation.

Improve team communication with business etiquette

The goal of business etiquette is to present a united company image, foster mutual respect for team members, and improve communication in the workplace. When teams communicate effectively, they do better work.

Effective communication doesn't stop there. Using software can help your team work together to meet deadlines and reach goals. With team communication software, you can facilitate better communication between team members by ensuring everyone receives the right information at the right time.

1.7 APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION FOR A SOCIAL GATHERING

Today's world is all about showing your best social skills and communication skills for marketing yourself. The budding entrepreneurs constantly need to sell themselves and market their business ideas. To bucket up the investors for the business, one needs to attend social gatherings and socialize with people to get them involved in their venture plan. However, in the workplace, these skills can be an essential aspect of staff interaction, planning, and collaboration. In this article, we discuss what social skills are, how to apply them in the workplace and why developing social skills is so important.

However, it's very important to impress the person with your witty remarks and steal the show with your knowledge. Many people are not comfortable with the words and not everyone can express their thoughts clearly which forfeits the chance of great investment opportunities from our hands. It is necessary to improve communication and social skills. So in this article, we will talk about ways to improve your social skills and effectively communicate in your workplace.

What Are Social Skills?

Methods of Improving Social Skills

How to Leave a Mark on a Social Gathering?

What Are Communication Skills?

Ways to Communicate Effectively in the Workplace

What Are Social Skills?

Social skills, also known as interpersonal or soft skills, are used to communicate with others. There are several types of communication skills we use daily including: verbal, nonverbal, written, and visual. Verbal skills involve the spoken language, while nonverbal communication skills include body language, facial expressions, and eye contact. Strong social skills can help you build and maintain successful relationships both professionally and personally and also help you in being a good public speaker.

Methods of Improving Social Skills

To be a better communicator, one has to improve their social skills, improving social skills will help you in every aspect of life. Some of the methods to improve Social Skills in life are:

Instead of shying away, try to start a conversation with a stranger, your acquaintances and family. Ask an open-ended question that keeps the communication going, the need to engage is extremely important here.

Try to broaden your answer, when answering someone's question. This led to deeper communication and you can practice your conversation skills.

Observe the social skills of the people around you, especially your colleagues. You can learn a lot of things from your surroundings. Observing their way of non-verbal and verbal communication will help you in improving yours.

Main eye contact while conversing with the opposite person.

Just talking is not enough, you need to develop your listening skills as well.

Take the help of books, podcasts and YouTube videos to improve your social skills.

Be aware of the current events and news of the world, this will give you topics to have start conversations with others.

How to Leave a Mark on a Social Gathering?

There isn't any rocket science behind alluring the people, it is easy to behave in social gatherings. There are some basic rules which you need to regimen before entering any social event. So, draw your attention here.

Make a Killer First Impression

When we meet someone for the first time, the very first thought that pops into our mind are to make a long-lasting impression that they stay lifelong with us. The points that will help you to make an ebonics first impression for the audience are –

Smile often, will exude positivity. Smiling makes you appear more friendly and gregarious and, others will feel more comfortable in your presence. Don't smile like a fool, just a little, to look friendly and easily approachable. Smile as you mean it.

Make eye contact with the other person while talking and that will define your confidence in the other person. Eye contact displays confidence and is one of the quickest ways to make people gravitate toward you. There is a simple trick to show your strength and social skills that will improve your confidence in the other person. So make eye contact with the person while talking to them with your striving confidence.

Your body language should be open to the public. Rigid body language is the definition of nervousness and lack of confidence. The body language should be relaxed and no need to be prim and proper. Positive body language includes good posture, leaning in slightly when someone is speaking (displays interest), and smiling/eye contact. This will helps in improving communication and social skills.

Be a Good and Patient Listener

You need to develop good listening qualities in lieu to get the attention of others in a social meet-up. Take time to understand the other person's view and, only after understanding it reciprocate your answer. Some people confuse listening with hearing. They both are different things you need to understand, what is being communicated to show your interest by:

Giving them your full interest and showing that you're understanding their words.

Take time to ask questions on the topic of the discussion.

Make valuable remarks on the topic and share your valuable opinion with the person.

Give Compliments

Giving compliments to the person while making the introduction will give you the right start. Give genuine compliments where applicable and be honest about them. If you notice something nice about a person don't be afraid to let them know. Phrases such as "That is a nice shirt by the way. Where did you get it?" or "You have a very admiring personality makes you much more amiable and breeds pleasant social interactions.

So, these are a few simple tricks to make social gatherings your show. But after reading this topic and observing the experiences you will get to know that confidence is the key element here. This will helps in improving communication and social skills. If you have the right amount of confidence in yourself, then no one can stop you from becoming successful. So, try to embed confidence in your body language and you will see the changes yourself.

Effective Communication

What Are Communication Skills?

Communication skills are the activities that make your performance ultimately a good one. Communication skills are very important in every human being's life it is used in both, as in your personal life and your professional life.

It is also the abilities of when you give and receive different kinds of information from different sources. When you communicate ideas, feelings, or even any update regarding your work or project. Communication skills involve listening, speaking, observing, and empathizing. Having good communication skills helps to develop your personality and one can also be given the top priorities as a leader.

Communication is the key. Whether it's written or spoken, reading, or listening, these skills are crucial in any workplace and can make you a better, more effective, and more efficient employee,

Ways to Communicate Effectively in the Workplace

When the employees have good communication skills, superiors can better understand the potential, willingness, talents, and skills of their employees. Some of the ways to communicate effectively are:

Encourage open discussion: In this, a manager acknowledges his\her employee's, views which is important. They ask their employees for valuable inputs. Encourage managers to clearly show that they have heard employees' opinions and engage the employees on a personal level. The managers recognize their employees and acknowledged the employee's inputs.

More face-to-face or phone conversations: A face-to-face conversation will last longer as more people talk together, which makes them stronger and better relationships with employees, managers and the boss. As, in a face-to-face conversation one can perceive each other feelings, facial expressions, and body language. Having, eye contact will also help to get an understanding of the communication and good internal networking might help you in the future.

Be careful when wording emails: When you are writing the mail to your manager or your boss, don't write like the reader is your best friend. Don't assume the reader knows who you are and why you are emailing. Don't use informal language. Don't forget to proofread for spelling and grammar mistakes. Write in a way that will boost them to open your mail.

Be aware of body language: Your body language can influence the way others respond to you. It can also impact how they perceive you and your intentions. Being highly aware of your body language can influence your productivity and reputation in your workplace.

Make meetings meaningful: While making the meetings one should have a clear agenda, so that everyone in the workplace has a clear idea about when and which meetings have to be scheduled at which time.

Effective communication is integral in your life. Without communication nothing is possible. One can eliminate unnecessary, unwanted problems and can promote better performance with the help of communication. The ability to communicate depends on your social skills, so before communication improving your social skills is extremely important as well.

Wearing proper business attire:

Business attire is the clothing you wear in professional settings. You might decide how to dress depending on the scenario, such as an interview or for a meeting or the type of industry you work in. There are varying levels of business attire, ranging from “casual” to “business formal.” Based on the setting, you can decide which kind of business attire is appropriate.

a closer look at the different types of business attire, examples of clothing types and the situations they’re appropriate for.

Types of business attire

Below is an outline of the most common types of business attire:

1. Casual

Casual business attire is informal clothing worn not only in most business settings but also in many settings outside of work. You might wear casual clothing if you work in an informal office where others wear things like T-shirts, jeans and open-toed shoes. You should avoid wearing casual dress with clients and in interviews, even if the office is casual overall.

Examples of casual attire: Casual dress includes items like T-shirts, button-down shirts, blouses and sweaters on top. Bottoms might include jeans, khakis, linen pants, cropped pants or shorts. Casual shoes can include sneakers, loafers, low heels or sandals.

2. Smart casual

Smart casual is another form of casual business attire with a stylish twist. You might include more trendy pieces of clothing if dressing in smart casual. This type of business attire is appropriate for more flexible offices including informal settings.

You might also choose to wear smart casual in an interview for a more informal office. This way, you fit in with their informal dress code while still maintaining a clean, professional look that communicates that you care about your appearance.

Examples of smart casual attire: Smart casual might include items like blazers, sports jackets, ties, button-down shirts, collared shirts, dresses, sweaters, trousers, khakis, skirts, blouses, heels, flats, dress shoes, clean sneakers, jewelry, belts and scarves.

3. Business casual

Business casual is a common form of dress worn in many offices. While many classic business staples are used in business casual wear, there are casual elements included like khakis.

Business casual is appropriate for many interviews, client meetings and office settings. Because it is not very casual and also not very formal, this is usually an appropriate way to dress if you're unsure about the setting.

Examples of business casual attire: Examples of business casual clothing include pencil skirts, slacks, khakis, trousers, blouses, collared shirts, button-down shirts, sport coats, blazers and sweaters. Accessorize with jackets, ties, simple jewelry and belts. Shoes can include flats, lifestyle sneakers (with leather or canvas), Oxfords, loafers, mules, boots or heels.

4. Business professional

Business professional is a traditional form of attire used in more conservative settings or companies with strict dress codes. You might wear business professional in industries like finance, government or law. Business professional clothes should be well-fitted and may be tailored to fit you specifically.

Examples of business professional attire: When dressing business professional, you can wear tidy dresses, slacks, skirts, slacks, dark-colored suits and ties. Business professional tops include neat button-down shirts or blouses with a blazer. Business professional shoes include heels, loafers or flats. You can accessorize with minimal jewelry and belts.

5. Business formal

Business formal is reserved for the most formal settings such as award ceremonies, special dinners, benefits or other important evening events. Business formal is similar to "black tie," but should be reserved to maintain professionalism.

Examples of business formal attire: Business formal includes a dark pants suit, dark suit and tie, a black suit with a light button-down shirt, skirt suit or suit dress. In some cases, a long evening dress may be appropriate. Shoe options include formal flats, heels, Oxfords or loafers. Accessorize with jewelry, belts, a tie clip, or small cuff links

6. Gender-neutral professional dress

There are several ways of dressing for the workplace and different degrees of formality that do not adhere to a gender binary.

You can dress gender-neutral elements up or down depending on the situation for which you're dressing. For casual dress, jeans, sweaters and shirts are all great options. For shoes, you might choose trendy sneakers, sandals or loafers.

For more formal forms of dress, you might choose slacks, trousers or neat chinos. Options for tops include sweaters, button-downs or shirts with cardigans. Shoes might include loafers, oxfords or stylish lace-up shoes.

Pantsuits are a great option for any formal setting. These can be paired with flat or slightly heeled oxfords or loafers.

Business attire tips

When deciding how to dress for certain situations, there are a few things to consider:

If you work in an office, pay close attention to the way people dress. While the office may be casual, you might notice that people in leadership positions dress slightly more formally. You may choose to dress similarly to the people who hold the position you would like to reach.

If you're going to an interview, check the company's "About Us" page and social media profiles for clues about their culture. They might have pictures or videos about their offices where you can see how employees typically dress. If you're still unsure, ask your recruiter or another contact what they recommend you wear to be successful in the interview.

If you're going to a business meeting, ask your colleagues who may know or have met with this same person about how their offices operate and how you can appear respectful and professional during your meeting with them.

In any setting, avoid overly large or busy accessories, heels that are four inches or higher, and any clothing with profanity or possibly offensive imagery or phrases.

You might use different styles of business attire for different settings or occasions. Pay attention to the dress code, if applicable. If not, look to other people's styles of dress or ask around if needed. Dressing appropriately can help you be seen as a professional employee who cares about your success in the role.

What Is Business Formal Attire?

Whether you're representing your company or your own personal brand at a professional event, ensuring that you're dressed appropriately will help you make a strong impression on colleagues in your industry.

Understanding the basic rules surrounding business formal attire will help you plan for your next industry event.

What is business formal attire?

Business formal attire is clothing that is professional and required for certain companies, employers and events. While wholly subjective to the environment, business formal is generally defined by modest colors and styles. All articles of clothing should match and complement one another.

Five things to include in your business formal attire

You can dress professionally appropriate by following these guidelines to create your business formal outfit

Slacks or skirts

Modest and clean footwear

A button-down shirt or blouse

A tailored suit or blazer

Appropriate accessories

1. Slacks or skirts

If you want to wear a skirt, choose a well-tailored, dark skirt or pantsuit. Your skirt should generally be around knee-length. If you choose to wear slacks, opt for a matching blazer and/or blouse.

Those who want to wear pants should choose slacks that are an exact match to their suit jacket. Have your pants professionally pressed to ensure there is a fresh crease down the front of each leg. For the most professional look, your suit slacks should sit either right above the heel of your dress shoe or right at the top of the dress shoe. This is called a medium or slight break in the slack. Any higher could be considered less professional, depending on the industry or event you're attending.

2. Modest and clean footwear

If you choose a heel, be sure it's no higher than one and one-half or two inches from the ground. Shoes should have a neutral or dark-colored heel and be close-toed. Similar rules apply to flats. They should be clean and dark or neutral-colored.

Dress shoes should be polished, lightly worn and black or brown, depending on your suit or blazer color. If your suit is navy, choose brown dress shoes. If your suit is gray or black, wear black dress shoes. A brown dress shoe can be chosen with a gray suit, depending on the shirt and tie combination you choose.

3. A button-down shirt or blouse

When choosing a blouse to go with your blazer and skirt or slacks, opt for a well-tailored top that's as comfortable as it is professional. Sleeveless blouses are generally accepted, but they're also typically worn with blazers. When it comes to color, choose a solid color or one with a subtle print. If your suit or skirt has a print, it's helpful to choose a solid blouse so any patterns complement each other.

When choosing a dress shirt, find one that's measured by the neck and sleeve length. Most general department stores carry measured dress shirts. In regard to color, it's best to stick with white, light blue or gray, as all of these complement a black, gray or navy suit. Lastly, be sure it's well-tailored. This will help your entire outfit look professional

4. A tailored suit or blazer

If you're not wearing a matching suit, you should find a blazer that matches your pants or skirt and have it tailored to fit as comfortably as possible.

Blazer arm lengths can be as short as elbow-length or as long as wrist-length. For suits, your jacket arm length should expose about an inch of your dress shirt cuff, especially if you plan to wear a French-cuff dress shirt that presents cuff links.

5. Appropriate accessories

If you choose to wear accessories with your business formal attire, make sure they're simple and comfortable. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when choosing accessories:

Jewelry: Keep it simple and understated. For example, one or two bracelets, a necklace and subtle earrings are usually appropriate.

Watch: If you wear a watch, choose one that's refined and professional.

Purse, briefcase or shoulder bag: Whatever you use to carry your personal items should be large enough to carry any makeup and a phone or tablet, along with any tools you'll need for a successful event or workweek.

Belt: Your belt should match or complement the color of your shoes.

Patterned socks: A pair of appropriately-patterned socks can add a final touch of professionalism to your attire.

Using grammatically correct language:

Communication is an integral human activity. No human can live in isolation and to live in a society, we need to interact. For interaction between two people, we need to communicate.

Oxford dictionary defines communication as activity or process used for expression of ideas and feelings or used by people for giving information. Hence we can say that it involves sharing of ideas and information between one person to other person.

When a child grows, it is necessary that he is taught how to communicate as when the children are taught how to express themselves, they develop better communication skills rather than only by imitating. It is useful for their future as they have to go in the outside world. So we can say that grammar is important due to a variety of reasons.

Why is it Important to Use Proper Grammar?

Reasons why you should apply the correct grammar when you speak and write:

Using proper grammar helps you to think logically and distinctly.

You will develop effective communication skills

It improves your fluency in the language

Very beneficial when you are applying for a job

Not being able to pass a message clearly, can diminish your organization's name

Poor usage of grammar can give a negative impression about you

It helps you to build a reputation as a professional

Helps you gain credibility

Importance of Grammar in Communication:

The following mentioned are a few tips on why is it important to study grammar.

1. Important in all forms of communication:

There are many forms of communication. Most people think of communication as primarily speaking and listening but it is far more complicated than it. If we go in detail, it is of four types that is used by people mostly- written, verbal, graphical and non-verbal. Further, they can be subclassified as written into books, notes, letters; verbal into dialogues, lectures; graphical into sketches, drawings, flow charts and non-verbal is about the body language and sign language.

2. Improves skill of expression:

Communication is a skill which can be learned. People must learn how to communicate well so that they express themselves in a successful manner. A child observes communication between his parents, other people around him and then imitating them. Importance of good Grammar is the essence of every language. Grammatical Competence is also a part of language competence. Hence to obtain an effective communication skill, the learners should pay attention to grammar.

3. Enhances accuracy:

Grammar is very important as it helps increase accuracy. Grammar forms the habit in the mind of the learners and when combined with logic and rhetoric skills, it accustoms the learner to language accuracy and slowly, to the accuracy of thinking. The rules of grammar help the learners to develop a routine of thinking in a logical and clearer way. Hence, when they study grammar, they become more accurate in the language. If you can't write properly, you can't relay your matter with accuracy.

4. Good grammar saves time in business:

Key management skill is being able to communicate effectively in the workplace. If you have a good grasp on grammar, it ensures that the messages are delivered and relayed promptly. Good grammar reduces the confusion when an employee does anything, be it filing a report, filing a complaint, sending an instant message to a project manager or voicing opinion in a meeting. When the message is delivered grammatically correct, it also reduces the time wasted in translation and in follow up of the message and this leads to higher productivity.

5. Helps in climbing the corporate ladder:

Employees who have good communication fluency are more likely to succeed at their jobs because their writing and speaking reflects a level of professional competency. It is noticed by supervisors, by clients and all. Demonstrating superior level of communication is one of the important factors that lead to a promotion or better title and pay in the future.

6. Grammar clears the message:

Grammar is very important in language. It is the glue that holds the pieces of language together. If the language is unclear and the message meaningless, it can be attributed to incorrect grammar. Hence it means that the person is unable to communicate effectively and the person who is the intended recipient of the message or who is reading the work may not get the real meaning. It will only increase the confusion in the mind of the reader.

7. Helps in saving the face:

In today’s professional world, everyone thinks that everyone knows the language. It also helps in describing about how one feels and responds to one another. It carries a lot of importance in the business arena. When employees use proper grammar, it helps them maintain a level of professionalism and also makes an impression on the colleagues and customers alike. It also reflects that the employee truly cares about his job, his responsibility towards the company and its products/services. When a speaker uses correct grammar, it is a sign of respect as they took time to polish themselves and forms a good impression on the listeners.

8. It is important even in digital world:

People often think that bloggers and online article writers do not need proper grammar. Since they write in a conversational style and often misuse certain terms to create humour and sarcasm, it might be fine not to know the rules of grammar before beginning to write such blogs. However what people miss is that they use the conversational way of the language and hence take a bit of liberal freedom.

However, even bloggers must realize that mistakes can detract people from your credibility. Though people might understand what you intend to say, the truth is that people might not subscribe to your links, like your blogs if you make dumb mistakes. In such a case, buying from that person will be out of the question. Hence it always helps if you know the basic tenets of grammar, whether you are a personal or corporate blogger or a professional writer.

9. Integral for any business setup:

Effective communication is vital for any business setup. Management, employees and other people keep each other updated about the latest news, reports and information pertaining to the business, even communication with clients, suppliers are vital. In such a case, proper grammar is very important and it is a standard that the management should practice and preach. Most companies nowadays demand that the employees should have good communication skills to maintain the business’s good reputation and to propel the business to success.

10. Helps to become a figure of authority:

The entrepreneurs need to assert authority over the industry of their choice. When a person asserts authority, it significantly increases the trust of the customers in him. Once that trust is gained, it is more likely that those people will buy from you. It can be done through detailed information about the products or services by using properly structured sentences.

Just imagine, a person uses incorrect grammar in describing his product, what will you think about him? You will think that even the owner is not aware about his niche area and is just guessing. Though it might be untrue but the entrepreneur will not be able to justify this to the customers and thus the first impression will stay with them. Hence to gain loyalty and their trust, you need to impress them since the very beginning.

11. Helps in increased competitiveness:

Proper grammar boosts campaign ads. When the advertisements are carefully texted, they will get more attention. Everyone knows that in business, popularity is very important and when the marketing campaigns are going on smoothly backed up by the strong production team, the business is bound to get wings and stay ahead of its competitors by beating them.

12. Gives Credibility, respect, convenience and posterity:

Any material which is grammatically correct indicates awareness and carefulness on the part of the writer. If it indicates otherwise, people will question its credibility and accuracy of content. If you are in the corporate world, underpaid employees who work overtime will resent receiving a document which is replete with grammatical errors and will earn them a rebuke from the senior.

In today's digital world, everything is saved on the internet and any document that you publish will be retained forever in the memory of the internet, along with the mistakes that it contained. Hence it becomes all the more important for it to be error free.

13. Not much used in chatting:

With the advent of technology and social networking, people have become lazier. When they text or use Facebook, Twitter or Myspace, they tend to use simple sentences and without focusing on the grammar. Everything nowadays is short and brief. Fragments of sentences are used and for them, it is fine as long as what they send is understandable by the other person.

14. Gives edge over competitors:

When writing on behalf of your organization also, it is important to use correct grammar as it can mean all the difference between the people trusting your expertise or questioning your knowledge of the matter of subject. If good communication is missed, you cannot work smoothly and normally. Even in the corporate world, being able to communicate effectively gives the business an edge over its less articulate competitors. Poor grammar affects marketing strategies and might even hinder the efforts of strengthening the relationship with the customers.

How to Improve English Grammar?

The importance of using proper grammar are many. Though there are various ways to develop your grammar, the best and effective way is to use the language whenever possible. Through regular practice you will be able to improve your grammar in a very short span of time.

Few effective ways to learn & improve English grammar:

Read more in English

Write more in English

Listen more to English

Practice more

Keep it simple

Take the help of a course

Importance of Using Correct Grammar in Business Communications:

"Your grammar is a reflection of your image. Good or bad, you have made an impression. And like all impressions, you are in total control." – Jeffrey Gitomer (American author & business trainer)

Your language fluency and usage hold great importance in the business field. Be it any type of business, usage of clear and effective language is mandatory. It can be in any form like speaking, writing, reading etc.

Moreover, documentation is very vital in the case of business dealing and other things. In such a case poor grammatical errors can give a cynical or bleak image about the organization. So written documentation related to company business and policies should be free of any type of errors and mistakes. The importance of it are,

First impressions matter

Good reputation

Improve productivity

Avoid miscommunication

Helps you keep your business' competitive edge

Avoid misunderstanding

Reduce the risk of dealing with lawsuits

Communications becomes more effective

Here are some of the problems many people experience when they're learning English:

No correction is done when you are making a mistake

Not having enough knowledge about grammar

Having doubts when you are using grammar

As seen above, one cannot deny the importance of grammar in communication. However, there are still many problems being faced in the use of grammar. It is true that it becomes a bit boring to study grammar, but it is all worth the effort. People can use online tools to analyze their mistakes and correct them.

1.8 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. State the Importance of Using Correct Grammar in Business Communications
2. Give importance of Business Etiquette
3. State different Types of business attire
4. Mention few types of Etiquette
5. What are the basic rules related to etiquette in a family?

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How is Etiquette changing in digital age?
2. How to use Etiquette on social media?
3. How to teach workplace etiquette?
4. How to use appropriate communication at social gatherings?
5. Describe the benefits derived from using proper etiquette at workplace.

Multiple choice question

1. ________________is a set of social and professional rules that govern the way people interact with one another in business settings.

a) Business etiquette

b) Social behavior

c) Social distance

d) Business Rivalry

2. When someone else is speaking, it is important to nod or _________.

a) laugh

b) smile

c) cry

d) go away

3. Any material which is grammatically correct indicates awareness and carefulness on the part of the ________.

a) Writer

b) Reader

c) Publisher

d) Distributor

4. ______________ is very vital in the case of business dealing and other things

a) Trips

b) Enjoyment

c) Documentation

d) Holidays

5. ________________ conversation is most effective when distance is longer and time is a great factor

a) Face-to-face

b) Imaginary

c) written

d) Telephonic

1.9 REFERENCES

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UNIT 2 WORKING IN TEAMS

STRUCTURE

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this Students will be able to

- Define the concept of Teamwork
- Understand the significance of Team leader
- Learning characteristics of team members
- Explain significance of Effective team work

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Teamwork can be defined as the activity of working together in a group with other people, especially when this is successful.

But in reality, it is much more than that.

When a business has a group of employees who not only work for the business but work for each other, you can create a wonderful sense of cohesion.

This all sounds simple, but being able to manage a team to create a positive atmosphere is harder than it seems.

Here are the 3 points we believe are key to being able to build a cohesive, fluid team:

1. Good Leadership

Effective teamwork doesn't just happen, it has to be built. As a business owner, team building is part of your job. You should be able to identify the different skill sets of your team to be able to create specialized individual teams. From there, you can equip them with the tools and resources that help them collaborate effectively.

It's a key leadership skill to be able to identify people who will work well together and give them the right tools to succeed.

It's also important that a leader works with the team.

For example, no employee wants to see their team leader slack while everybody else is working hard. So as a leader, it's important to roll up your sleeves and get stuck in.

2. An Organized Workflow

Speaking of the right tools, successful teams need an organized workflow. Being able to equip themselves with the tools and resources, helps them to collaborate effectively.

An organized workflow is a key tool when it comes to successful teamwork.

For example, if a team takes a scattergun approach to a task, then it often ends with people doing similar tasks and stepping on each other's toes.
This is why teams often use a project management system that helps everyone track tasks and progress in one place.
There's a huge amount of organizational tools for small and large businesses. So it's a good idea to find one that works for you and your team.

3. Communication

Communication skills are a key proponent of any successful team. There should be no room for confusion within a team as everything should be clearly laid out.
When people are given clear, achievable tasks then they can work at an optimum level with no time wasted.
Conflict management also falls under this bracket. It's important for a team to be able to communicate through conflict and know how to handle it.
In pressured situations, personal conflicts can seem inevitable. But conflict doesn't always have to be negative.
Sometimes it's best to put your grievances out on the table for everybody to solve together. There's nothing worse for team spirit than underlying anger, tension or gossip.
For example, if a certain team member needs a task to be completed before they can finish theirs, frustration can arise.
But if this is clearly communicated and all parties understand the process, then it can be quickly solved. This means that the project can continue moving forward.
That is why it is important to communicate a solid foundation of ground rules and clear expectations of each and every team member.

2.2 DEFINITION OF TEAMWORK

Definition: Teamwork is a set of actions done by a group having a common purpose or goal. Teamwork is generally fulfilled under a collaborative environment since there is the assumption that working together produces a better outcome than making separated efforts.

What Does Teamwork Mean?

In companies, teamwork usually occurs when several employees provide their competences, knowledge and professional experience to achieve a shared objective. A plan is generally made at the beginning to set responsibilities and tasks to each member as well as resources and timelines. Ideally, there is a leader that coordinates the activities, facilitate conflict resolution and maintain people properly aligned to the plan.
In the process, every person participating in the team is supposed to maintain communication and collaboration with other members in order to facilitate tasks as well as to enrich ideas and solutions. The team can be made up of employees of either the same department or different organizational areas. Someone with the proper authority decides when teamwork is needed to accomplish a goal and who must participate in it. The number of people involved can vary from two to many, because a very large group can be divided in sub-teams to increase work efficiency.

Example

Jones & Brothers is a large firm operating in the consulting business. It provides advice and solutions in a wide range of subjects to manufacturing companies. The founders developed a unique business model that consists in tailor-made, effective and professional teamwork. Its methodology guarantees integral vision of all operational areas as well as alignment to the client's strategic goals.

The consulting firm first makes a complete diagnosis and then designs a plan to address each problem identified with small expert teams that at the same time are closely coordinated with the broader team.

The plan initially defines individual assignments but the group could later agree to some changes in order to make teamwork more efficient. In this way, teams usually change from one client to the other according to specific subjects to solve, project complexity and timelines required by the client.

2.3 IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWOR

The dictionary describes teamwork as "the combined action of a group, especially when effective and efficient".

In business terms, teamwork is when a group of people collaborate to achieve a mutual goal. This means that people within a group use their skills to overcome each other's weaknesses and achieve a goal which was otherwise not possible.

Teamwork in business also means setting aside any personal conflicts and coming to a mutual conclusion that not only benefits the group but also the organization.

It involves constructive feedback and improving each other's ability without any personal grudges and feuds.

What is the importance of teamwork

Now that you know what teamwork means, let's get into why organizations stress on teamwork so much.

When it comes to the importance of teamwork, there are more than a few reasons why it's significant in a company's growth and success.

It builds a harmonic relationship between employees, it brings out the best within a team and obviously, the efficiency improves significantly.

So here are some of the top reasons why teamwork is so important.

Teamwork unites people:

When a group of people work together in a healthy and positive environment, they're more likely to bond and develop friendships. Such is the social behaviour of human beings.

In such situations, people cooperate much better than a hostile environment. A close-knit group of people are more likely to showcase healthy competition and a desire to achieve goals.

Speaking of goals, the best example of teamwork encouraging unity is the game of football.

11 players working together to achieve a goal (pun intended). The togetherness in a football team is known to foster life long friendships and that is the power of teamwork!

Teamwork promotes efficiency:

When people work in groups, it significantly improves their efficiency.

The simple reason is that in a group, the workload is shared and doesn't put pressure on a particular individual.

When a group has the same goal, they're more likely to perform better by bringing out the best in each other.

It also increases efficiency because of different minds come together in performing the same task.

Teamwork fosters a learning environment

One of the important aspects of teamwork is encouraging a learning environment. When

different people come together to work on the same project, there's a chance of learning from one another.
For example, a single project which requires the input of different team opens up the path for employees to understand each other's work. It also allows people to interact with each other and learn new things not only about their job profile but also others' responsibilities.
This allows your employees to acquire new skills which help their individual as well as the company's growth.

Teamwork offers better opportunities for feedback

Generally, employees don't take criticism too well from their managers, let alone their peers. This creates a hostile work environment where it's controversial to give feedback to peers.
So, manager and peers have to be very careful and diplomatic while giving feedback or pointing out mistakes. But when you have a teamwork culture at your organization, people are much more friendly and focused. They all know that their goal is pretty much the same.
This allows peers to openly address issues and give feedback to each other. This, in turn, rewards the organization with more informed and better-performing employees.

Teamwork helps in resolving issues faste

Teamwork environment promotes a more open and friendlier group of employees. This induces a better problem-solving workforce as everyone can share their different perspectives.
Different perspectives give insight into different aspects of problems. This broadens the scope of resolving issues, which can be done more effectively and faster
Ways to promote teamwork at the workplace
Now that you've understood the importance of teamwork and how it can propel your team or business towards success, let's see how we can induce a teamwork environment at our workplace.
Whether you're a manager, an owner or an employee, you can use these tips to instil a sense of teamwork at your workplace. You can always share these ideas with your manager to start encouraging teamwork at work.

Define roles

One of the common and yet highly ignored things is defining roles. When your team doesn't have defined roles, there's a high chance of feuds and resentment among your employees.
So, define the roles and responsibilities of your team and put it on a sheet which can be accessed by everyone. This way everyone will be on the same page.
It is also better to keep the roles and responsibilities of immediate teammates on the same sheet. This eradicates any chance of discrepancies.

Informal social gatherings

Team building exercises don't live up to the hype. What is the point of making mandatory team-building exercises when employees don't wish to do it?
It is better to have a small informal gathering of your team, where they can bond with each other without hesitation and on their terms.
Another good tip will be to hold such informal gatherings multiple times in a year with different activities.
This will include everyone as people can pick and choose which kind of activity they

want to be a part of.
This will promote a healthy relationship among employees who are not forced to interact with each other. This bonding is most likely to transpire at the office desk too.
Reward teams for their teamwork
A reward is probably the best way to lure people into doing something. If you don't have a teamwork culture at your workplace, then the quickest and effective way to instil such culture is by rewarding people for their team efforts.
When an individual employee steps out of his/her comfort zone to help another teammate then officially rewarding that person will promote the idea of teamwork among others.
Employees will soon realize that helping others can make shine under the limelight. This will naturally improve the efficiency of your workplace and reduce a hostile environment.

Stop micromanaging

You have employees that are adults, they can perform the tasks assigned to them.
You can't induce a teamwork culture when your managers are trying to micromanage everything an employee is doing.
It's better to set goals, deadlines and let the teamwork it out themselves. There should be trust among the management and employees to promote teamwork.
Nobody likes breathing down their neck, so give your team ownership of the project and let the teamwork it out.

Acknowledge individual performances

"There is no I in team" is probably the most overrated statement. There's a difference between being arrogant and being a team player.
Just because a person is a team player, that doesn't mean that the person doesn't want to be appreciated.
As humans, we all want to be appreciated for our efforts, whether working alone or with a team.

So, when you have people performing excellently in a team environment, acknowledge them.
This will instil healthy competition among your group, which will improve your team's performance.

Take feedback from everyone

When it comes to feedback, it is important to get feedback from your team as much as it is to give them.
When you want to take feedback on a project or operations, don't go to your favourites. Include everyone!
During brainstorming sessions, include everyone! Ideas can come from anywhere from anyone. It is not a rule that when you want to come up with a new idea for your product, then you only need the product team members.
Similarly, it's always better to include everyone in such brainstorming sessions. It will make your employees feel that they're important and it will also bring your workforce together.
Concluding, teamwork is the essence and the DNA of success. Salesforce reported that over 86% of employees believe that workplaces fail because of a lack of collaboration. It's not only important for the growth of an organization but it is equally important for a person's individual growth.
Teamwork improves the efficiency of a workplace, makes the environment friendlier and

encourages innovation. You can introduce teamwork at your workplace by doing simple things such as informal get-togethers, defining roles and rewarding teams.

2.4 VARIOUS STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Taking talented individuals and turning them into a high-performance team is always a challenge. Add in the realities of today's work environment, and the issues of creating and coaching a collaborative and trusting team take on new dimensions.

Leveraging a bit of behavioral psychology can help. It all starts with the stages of group development discovered by Bruce Tuckman in 1965.

What is Tuckman's model of team development?

Tuckman's model of team development recognizes that groups don't form spontaneously or immediately. Rather, they develop through clearly defined stages, eventually transitioning from strangers with singular ambitions to a dynamic group of collaborators with a like-minded focus.

Tuckman—a behavioral psychologist—originally came up with his team-building theory in 1965, when his research revealed that groups of all kinds followed a common four-step pattern when forming into teams. Twelve years later, in collaboration with Mary Ann Jensen, he expanded the theory to include a fifth stage, which took into account the disbanding of the team once it reached its goals.

For over 50 years, managers and team leaders across many industries—including health and social care, the military, and software development—have leveraged Tuckman's stages model to reach their desired results. The following explores the stages and provides ideas for group activities to help your team reach its full potential.

The 5 stages of team development

The five stages of team development are:

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing
5. Adjourning

This team development framework, according to Tuckman, progresses in a natural and fluid manner, each stage building on the one that preceded it and sometimes—as explained in more detail below—reverting back to a previous stage before moving forward.

1. Forming

The forming stage of team development is punctuated by excitement and anticipation. Group members are on high alert, each wanting to put their best foot forward while, at the same time, sizing up each other's strengths and weaknesses.

In this initial phase of group interaction, individual members tend to behave deferentially to one another. Because each new team member sees their role from the perspective of individual performance, the group doesn't accomplish much during this stage.

This is a good time for the group leader or manager to open up discussions about the team's mission. It's also a good time to address the ground rules, clearly stating what the team norms should be while reviewing expectations for team dynamics.

2. Storming

All that polite, deferential behavior that dominated the forming stage starts to fall by the wayside in the storming stage. Storming is where the metaphorical gloves come off, and some team members clash personally, professionally, or both. One team member might take offense at another's communication style. Work habits might be at odds, and perceptions about who is contributing what—and who might be left holding the bag—begin to surface. Members might start to question team processes. They also might form cliques. The result is likely to interfere with team performance and stall the team's progress.

This critical stage is a necessary evil in the formation of a successful team. Managers and team leaders need to confront issues directly. Ignoring them could let minor conflicts fester into major problems.

In the end, however, team members will have to come to a consensus about how to move forward as a team.

You can help the team break through the storming stage by encouraging members to refocus on goals. Try breaking large goals down into smaller, more manageable tasks. Then, work with the team to redefine roles and help them flex or develop their task-related, group-management, and conflict-management skills.

3. Norming

You will know your team has entered the norming stage when small conflicts occur less frequently and team members find ways to work together despite differences. Each person begins to recognize how their fellow team members contribute to the group, and that perspective—combined with a recommitment to the team's objectives—helps establish work patterns and accepted performance markers.

Some teams will toggle back and forth between the storming and norming stages. This may happen if work priorities shift and team members are temporarily thrown off-kilter. Given time, the storming will dissipate, and team members will come to appreciate how individual performance and group performance overlap.

What should you do? Wait, watch, and intervene only where necessary. The group needs to work out this dynamic organically. You can gently encourage team members to engage in self-evaluation to determine whether there is room for process improvement, but your primary focus should be on encouraging stability.

4. Performing

The relationships and interdependencies formed during storming and norming pay off in the performing stage. By now, team members have honed their conflict-resolution abilities and spend less time focused on interpersonal dynamics and more on team effectiveness. This is where surges in creative problem-solving and idea generation occur.

The lines between individual performance and team success blur as the team works to deliver results.

As momentum builds and each team member leans in to the team’s goals, productivity—both personal and collective—begins to increase. This may be the perfect time to evaluate team functions to increase productivity even more.

Even as you push for greater productivity, you should make a point of rewarding the team by showing confidence in their abilities, offering support for their methods and ideas, and celebrating their successes.

5. Adjourning

Often, the adjourning stage brings up bittersweet feelings, as team members go about the business of concluding the group’s functions. They start to focus on the details of completing any deliverables, finalizing documentation, and meeting reporting requirements. They might start looking toward their next assignments, leaving little energy or enthusiasm for finishing the tasks at hand.

Management can help the team navigate through the adjourning phase by acknowledging the team’s accomplishments and recognizing the difficulties that come with tackling all the loose ends.

Examples of group activities for each stage of team development

As your newly formed team starts its journey together, it’s helpful to have some team-building activities to help nurture team members through each phase of team development.

For example, let’s say you are heading up a group in your marketing department dedicated to the launch of a food product for a new client. The campaign will last six months. About half of the members of your creative team are full-time workers who know each other well and have been with the company for years. The other half are remote freelancers hired for this specific campaign.

No one among the group of independent talent has worked with anyone from the company before.

Because you’re managing a distributed team, a big focus will be on boosting collaboration between employees and freelancers.

Consider the following activities to bolster camaraderie among members on your creative team.

Stage 1: Forming activities

Forming is all about getting acquainted with the company and team members. The following activities—which everyone can participate in over video conferencing—can be helpful ice breakers:

- **Introductions.** Match up each team member with a new team member. Each will tell the other their name, what their job on the team is, and two fun facts that most people don’t know about them. Each person will then introduce the other to the group.
- **Client trivia.** Since the client you’ll be working for is new to the company, everyone is on the same footing when it comes to having limited knowledge about the client and the specific product. Divide the group into two teams. One team will have 30 minutes to research the client and the other will have 30 minutes to

research the new product. Each team will then have one hour to collaborate to create a 15-minute presentation about the facts they uncovered. Schedule a video call for the presentations and then open up the virtual floor for discussions about the client and the product.

- **Pet pictures.** Nothing brings people together like their pets. Have everyone change their online avatar to a picture of their pet for the day. For people who don't have pets, encourage them to take a picture of something (or someone) else in their home they are fond of. You might lose a little productivity on pet-picture day, but you'll more than make up for it in newfound rapport among team members.

Stage 2: Storming activities

Storming stage activities usually center around conflict resolution and the easing of tensions.

- **Use video whenever possible.** Since your full-time workers and remote freelancers are still learning to work together, encourage them to use video whenever possible, especially when resolving issues. The key is seeing people. When workers can see each other's expressions and body language, they'll be much more likely to empathize and work toward a resolution.
- **Give compliments.** A great storming stage activity is to help remind people that everyone was brought into the team because they have something valuable to contribute. Encourage full-time team members to complement and thank the freelancers for their contributions when appropriate. As the new kids on the block, the temporary creatives may feel insecure about how their work is being evaluated by the team. It's important for team leaders and management to also model this behavior.
- **Look how far we have come.** Map out a visual representation—an infographic or a slide deck—of the team's progress so far. This helps everyone realize that even though they are just getting started, and there is some tension in the air, they are working toward a common goal. Accomplishments to date could be as simple as creating workflows and doing brand research. As long as the team has moved forward in some capacity as a unit, this visual representation should resonate.

Stage 3: Norming activities

During the norming stage, you really want to give the team a wide berth as the members find their way to the performing stage. It's not unusual for some members of the group to propel the team back, at least temporarily, into storming. If you want to engage in a team activity, consider hosting a virtual happy hour or some other lighthearted excuse for freelance creatives and full-time team members to meet for reasons other than work.

Stage 4: Performing activities

Performing is the culmination of all the hard work your team has put in to date. While it may be tempting to take a sigh of relief, the last thing you want is for your team to start resting on their laurels. You might consider keeping the momentum going with these activities.

- **Think about the future.** This is similar to the "look how far we have come" visualization except you are creating it as if you are living a few months in the future. The idea is to keep the team pumped up by imagining where they are headed and what it will feel like to look back on even more success. Canva is a free drag-and-drop platform that team members can use to create virtual future-vision boards.

- **Ask three questions.** Since your team is in a creative flow, it's a perfect time for some constructive feedback. Get the hive mind working by asking the team these three important questions:
  - What is working?
  - What isn't?
  - What can we do better?
- **See what sticks.** This is a rapid-fire brainstorming game where the group gets together to throw around ideas about innovative ways to push the project over the finish line. If your team is on its way to completing the food product campaign, you can focus the group on brainstorming ideas for future adjourning activities. The point is to get your freelance creatives and full-time team members engaged with each other. Set up a video call and encourage all ideas—including off-the-wall ideas.

Stage 5: Adjourning activities

Adjourning is a time to acknowledge accomplishments while bringing closure to the team's work. The independent professionals will be moving on to their next contract engagements, and full-time team members will be moving on to other projects.

If you engaged in the "think about the future" activity during the performing stage, consider repurposing the vision board to evaluate whether the team accomplished what it set out to do. Get the group together on a video call and invite everyone to share their experiences of working with the team. Challenge each team member to acknowledge the ups and downs of the campaign, discuss the lessons learned, and provide suggestions on how to apply skills, knowledge, and insights they gained to their next engagements.

Once this post-mortem is concluded, you might want to send each team member a personal thank-you note acknowledging their unique contribution or organize a group celebration.

Developing an effective hybrid team

To develop an effective hybrid team and keep members focused and moving forward, today's team leaders should recognize how group dynamics play out in this new work environment. Fortunately, with a little ingenuity helped along by technology, teams can cohesively work together to achieve a common goal.

2.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF TEAM

A strong team is the foundation of a high-performing business. Characteristics of an effective team have some exclusive pattern. A good team ethic can be largely responsible for the success and smooth management of the organization. If employees do not gel and do well together, problems can arise, such as poor organization, missed workplace deadlines, and conflicts. Let's find some of the characteristics of an effective team.

So what can teams do to collectively be productive and move the company forward? Here are some of the qualities that a successful team possesses.

Think about the best teams you've been a part of or enjoyed watching their work as the characteristics of an effective team.

Now, remember the teamwork that you experienced. Hopefully, the painful memories are not too difficult to carry as characteristics of a successful team in the workplace. Let's describe the characteristics of effective teamwork in a learning environment.

These two memories represent the endpoints of a teamwork effectiveness continuum, at least based on your personal experience. You may have better and worse examples than what you have, but it will serve our purpose to keep it real list characteristics of effective teamwork.

Fig 1.1 characteristics of an effective team.

Turning groups into effective teams

How do you know?

Characteristics of an effective team have some exclusive pattern of qualities of a successful team. Given the full range of functionality possibilities,

I would like you to think about the team you lead or which member you are for traits of a good team member. Where does this team consistently fall?

There are many things to consider when you try to make an overall assessment, and there are many things to consider, and they are easy to rate at once.

If you want your team to improve its performance, you need to establish its current performance and then set goals where you want to describe characteristics of effective teamwork in a learning environment.

Characteristics of effective team

You can go back to the good and bad teams you were thinking about, and while evaluating you might try to identify those features that you unknowingly considered, or I could use the list I have involved for you to describe the characteristics of an effective team.

Here are some of the features that you would ask your team members to rate, I have included an overview of why these are important attributes of a good team member from the list and briefly explain the characteristics of working teams.

Characteristics of an effective team have some exclusive pattern of core attributes of an effective team.

1. Good leadership

A strong team usually has a leader that they trust and respect for characteristics of an ineffective team.

This person basically acts as a glue to the team together and should be responsible for setting the pace, providing encouragement and inspiration, and keeping all team members updated.

2. Effectively resolve disputes

All parties have conflicts, which is not a problem in itself. When they are unresolved or people become bloodied in the process of resolution, they only become a problem out of attributes of an effective team.

3. Address issues that are hurting the team

When inevitable problems arise, good teams notice, raise concerns and go into problem-solving mode of characteristics of a successful group.

They certainly do not fight the “elephant in the house”. Characteristics of an effective team have some exclusive pattern.

4. Each understands what is expected of us

A team is a collection of individuals with characteristics of effective teamwork in a learning environment. Everyone needs to know what it takes to be a member of a working team.

5. Support each other

Dissociating from colleagues is not a team to do everything on their own. Effective teams are collaborative and supportive entities. Characteristics of an effective team have some exclusive pattern.

6. Organized

The organization is essential for managing the business properly. Without it, the workplace can become chaotic and less likely to achieve goals, as traits of a successful team.

While each individual should be responsible for organizing their own workload, management should ensure that everything is in place for planning and that each member of the team is completing their work efficiently.

Regular meetings can help ensure that everyone is on the same page and the deadline is being met in the traits of an effective team.

7. Have fun

It’s all work and no game should be done! It can ignite flames and a lack of productivity, so it is important to enjoy some joy in functional life.

Teams that work especially well together enjoy each other’s company and get together from time to time outside the office and have some fun socially!

Creating a positive relationship with your colleagues can create a much more comfortable environment and reduce conflict, the characteristics of an effective team.

8. Agree with the process of finishing our work

There are several ways to get the job done. Skills usually require a shared process. When this feature is missing, chaos reigns, not qualities of an effective team player.

9. Each do a “fair share” of work

When team members start thinking that they are working harder than that, it must happen to prevent the prevailing conflict everywhere with attributes of effective teamwork.

10. Everyone contributes their fair share

Each member of the team contributes a fair share of their workload and fully understands what their responsibilities are and where they fit in with the management of the business. They feel a sense of belonging to the team, are committed to their work, and genuinely care for the success of the organization with characteristics of successful teamwork.

11. Offer support to each other

Team members are always happy to help others when they need a helping hand at work. Teams are often more productive when they are given support from the organization and given access to the necessary resources.

12. Constantly monitor our performance

This is an example of monitoring performance evaluated. You cannot fix what you do not notice. Ask for traits of effective teams.

13. Constantly work to improve our performance

Effective teams recognize that there are many opportunities for improvement. They are about better growth together in qualities of effective teamwork, 5 characteristics of an effective team.

14. Achieve goals

The bottom line is always the result. Working well together means very little if the team cannot deliver the characteristics of effective teams.

Fig 2.2 Characteristics of effective team

15. Members are diverse

Everyone is unique and will be able to give their own experiences and knowledge that others may not have 5 characteristics of effective teams.

Diversity is needed so that everyone on the team covers all of the required skills and each person can be assigned a special role based on their strengths and abilities. Various personalities, age groups, cultures, etc. can bring creativity and broad ideas to the table.

16. All love to be part of this team

Results do not work without connecting with peers. At the end of the day, people are glad that they are members of this group.

17. Have a clear idea of the purpose

This brings the group together. Everyone knows why the group exists. In addition to being clean, this should also be important. The cool is still good.

18. Communicate well with each other

They communicate openly with each other, sharing their thoughts, opinions, and ideas with their team members; Taking into consideration what others have to say as well.

Communication is essential to monitor progress and work together efficiently on tasks. Low communication may result in cross cables, meaning the work is incomplete/wrong or conflicts may arise not in the characteristics of an effective work team.

19. Focus on goals and outcomes

They agree and set team goals based on results and outcomes, more than just the amount of work being done for characteristics of a successful team in the workplace to describe the characteristics of effective teamwork in a learning environment.

Then a clear plan can be set about how they are going to achieve these goals, as a group, as well as the contribution of each individual. It provides them with clear direction and gives them something to aim for collectively achieve common characteristics of effective teams.

20. Have measurable objectives

The goals are the fuel that drives each member’s efforts. They know that there is work to be done and they strive to get it done for characteristics of successful teams.

21. Have access to the resources we need

It can be experts, data, tools, equipment, or decision authority as the characteristics of an effective team.

22. Decide effectively

Teamwork needs to be decided. Lots of decisions. Being good at making these decisions quickly sets the strongest teams apart from the weak ones for qualities of an effective team.

23. Communicate publicly with the group

Almost all teamwork issues can be traced back to a team’s inability to communicate effectively. Strengths and condos are essential teamwork ingredients, characteristics of effective teams in the workplace.

24. Openly communicate with interested parties outside the team

Your team is probably doing well but if no one else knows it, you have problems, for characteristics of effective teamwork.

25. Support organizations

Each team represents the use of scarce resources. People are expensive. They should only be deployed by something that helps the larger organization move forward as a part of highly effective team characteristics.

26. Know how the team will be evaluated

People want to win. The problem with many teams is that the definition of winning is not as characteristics of good teams. How can you achieve it if you do not know how to look good?

27. Understand the expectations of our customers

Each team serves the other. These can be internal or external customers. The team knows what these customers expect to succeed in this task for the qualities of a good team.

2.6 CONCEPT OF EFFECTIVE TEAM

Although the term "team" is frequently used for any group, but groups and teams are not the same things. "A work group is a number of persons usually reporting to a common superior and having some face to face interaction, who have some degree of inter dependence in carrying out tasks for the purpose of achieving organisational goals."

A work group's performance is what its members do as individuals. The performance is just the summation of each group member's individual contribution. There is no positive synergy in a group that would create an overall level of performance that is greater than the sum of the inputs.

On the other hand, a team's performance includes both individual result and collective work products. A work team creates positive synergy through co-ordinate efforts. The group performance, in a work team is greater than the summation of individual performance. Thus, a team is a form of group but it has some characteristics in greater degree than ordinary groups, including a higher commitment to group goal and higher degree of interdependence and interaction.

According to Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith, "A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."

"Any work group whose individual efforts result in a performance that is greater than the sum of individual inputs is called a work team."

All the groups are not teams. The above definitions help us to differentiate between these two terms.

Characteristics of Effective Teams:

Rensis Likert and Douglas McGregor, were among the early writers who directed attention to the importance of team functioning. They identified some of the characteristics of well functioning effective teams.

McGregor's lists of characteristics are as follows:

1. The atmosphere tends to be relaxed, comfortable and informal.
2. The team task is well understood and accepted by the members.
3. The members listen well to each other and there is a lot of task relevant discussion in which most members participate.
4. People express both their feelings and ideas.
5. Conflicts and disagreements are present but are centered around ideas and methods, not around personalities and people.
6. The group is self conscious about its own operations.
7. Decisions are usually based on consensus, not on majority votes.

When actions are decided upon, clear assignments are made and accepted by the members.

When all these characteristics are there, it means that the team is successfully accomplishing its mission and simultaneously satisfying the personal and interpersonal needs of the members.

In the later stages, a number of writers and researchers have built their work on the basis of the work of McGregor, Likert and others.

Glenn Parker developed a similar list of the characteristics of effective teams, following as its features:

1. Clear purpose (defined and accepted vision, mission, goal or task and an action plan.)
2. Informality (informal, comfortable and relaxed.)
3. Participation (discussion and every one encouraged to participate.)
4. Listening (members use effective listening techniques such as questioning, paraphrasing and summarizing.)
5. Civilized disagreement (team is comfortable with disagreement, does not avoid, smooth over or suppress conflict.)
6. Consensus decision making (substantial agreement through thorough discussion, avoidance of voting.)
7. Open communication (feelings are legitimate, few hidden agendas.)
8. Clear roles and work assignments (clear expectations and work evenly divided.)
9. Shared leadership (While there is a formal leader everyone shares in effective leadership behaviour.)
10. External relations (the team pays attention to developing outside relationships, resources, credibility etc.)
11. Style diversity (team has broad spectrum of group process and task skills.)
12. Self assessment (the team periodically stops to examine how well it is functioning.)

All the above characteristics contribute in making an effective team. We can further distinguish between effective teams and high performance teams. High performance teams have the same characteristics but to a higher degree. Katzenbach and Smith say that strong personal commitment to each other, commitment to the organisational growth and success, distinguishes high performance teams from effective teams.

Importance of Teams:

The next question is, why have the teams become so popular? Research evidence suggests that the teams typically outperform individuals when the task being done requires multiple skills, judgment and experience.

Teams are an effective means for management to democratize their organisation and increase employee motivation.

Experts agree that the following primary benefits can result from the introduction of work teams:

1. Improved Employee Motivation:

Work teams help in enhancing the employee motivation. Because work teams encourage employee involvement, these make the jobs more interesting and fulfill the social needs of the employees. Individuals are likely to perform better when they are working in the presence of other people. Individuals will work harder and put in a lot of extra efforts to remain in the team’s good graces.

2. Positive Synergy:

Teams have the potential to create high levels of productivity due to positive synergy created by them. The output in the form of performance productivities is generally more than the summation of inputs put in the form of employee efforts. There is a drawback of positive synergy also. Sometimes, managements resort to cuts in staff to use the positive synergy to get the same or greater output from fewer people.

3. Satisfaction of Social Needs:

Man is a social animal. He always feels the need of affiliation. Teams can satisfy this need of the employees by increasing worker interactions and creating a feeling of brotherhood and friendship among team members. Such employees are always in a better position to cope with stress and they enjoy their jobs more.

4. Commitment to Team Goals:

Teams generally develop a common purpose, commitment to that purpose and agreement upon specific goals. All this combined with the social pressures exerted by the team; result in a high degree of commitment to common team goals. The individual members sublimate their individual goals for the common goals of the group.

5. Improved Organisational Communication:

As the teams encourage interactions, it will lead to improved communication. In case of self managed teams, interpersonal dependencies are created which require the members to interact considerably more than when they work on jobs alone. Cross functional teams create inter-functional dependencies and increase organisation wide communication.

6. Benefits of Expanded Job Training:

The implementation of team work always leads to expanded job training. Through this training employees build their technical, decision making and interpersonal skills.

7. Organisational Flexibility:

Management has found that teams are more flexible and responsive to changing events than are traditional departments or other forms of permanent groupings. Teams have the capability to quickly assemble, deploy, refocus and disband. All this is because of the reason that teams focus on processes rather than functions. They encourage cross training so members can do each other's jobs and expansion of skills. This expansion of skills increases organisational flexibility.

Though the introduction of teams does not always achieve these benefits, but we can't ignore the reality that team movement currently has tremendous momentum and reflects management's belief that teams can be successful in a wide range of settings. There are obviously contingency factors that influence the acceptance and success of teams.

2.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF TEAM MEMBER

Every organization requires its employees to work together as a team to achieve its goals. It is possible to have different individuals working together in a group. But they must be team-oriented because effective teamwork depends on the character traits of a good team member.

What makes a good team member?

In general, what makes a good team member is the temperament to succeed in a team environment. A good team member puts the team first which means the person prioritises team success at the expense of personal achievements.

What determines a good team member is how well you can work with others, not whether you have anyone particular skill. Your skills or talent alone do not make you a good team member, it is the content of your character that determines whether you are a good team-oriented member.

For example, someone with excellent technical skills might not fit in a team if that person does not work well with others or cannot share information.

On the other hand, someone who is great at working with others might not have the same level of technical expertise but could still be an asset to the team if they can learn new things and contribute in other ways.
Yes, a good team member must bring value to the group. But still, you need to work well with the other team members, if you don't, there will not be a good synergy in the team.

What are the qualities of a good team member?

Here are 14 character traits of a good team member:

1. Having an identity

A good team member should have an identity. To develop a personality at work, they must align their goals with team goals, have a sense of belonging, and improve the ability to adapt.
When a team member has an identity within a team, they will always be willing to do what is best for all team members. They will not prioritize their well-being at the expense of the team's success.

2. Being committed

A good team member must have a genuine commitment to their team cause. Also, the person must show interest and belief in their colleagues and consider them equals.
Good team members looking towards working effectively in a team should strive to make every member of their groups better each day. They are committed to the team's cause and in ensuring they add value to it.

3. Being flexible

When it comes to teamwork, flexibility is vital. It ensures that each member is working well in a team. Teamwork requires personal sacrifice and accommodating divergent views that you might not agree with within the team.
Flexibility among team members makes it easy for the team to address any disagreements that might arise. A fantastic team player will always want to participate in an activity, even if they might not know how to navigate it.
Their flexibility is shown when faced with difficult situations, and they deal with them without showing signs of pressure or stress.

4. You are humble

When working with other team members, a team-oriented employee to be humble. You need to acknowledge your mistakes and work toward correcting them. Being humble also requires that you appreciate the efforts of your teammates. And you must always take full accountability and responsibility for your actions.

5. An effective communicator

One of the qualities of a good team member is their ability to communicate well with your teammates. To work well with others in a team you must share the necessary information at the right time. Being an effective communicator also means you're a good listener who allows others to talk without interrupting them.
Effective communication is vital to successful teamwork and it plays a big part in creating and maintaining a culture of openness within the team. It also helps individuals to dialogue with others and solves any problems that might arise.
A good team player knows to ask questions wherever necessary and provides relevant information wherever required.

6. A consistent performer

For a team to achieve success, every member must fulfill their responsibility and do whatever they can and complete the work on time. In other words, each member should work towards helping the team achieve its goals.
A good performer is a valued member who can take on the extra responsibility of ensuring that the team gets the results everyone needs. However, being a performer does not mean you are automatically a good team player.
You become good when you perform in a positive way that contributes to team success.

7. Being objective

A good team player must have an open mind, and should not be judgemental. Every team is just a group of individuals with different ways of looking at things. Each member can have their objectives and use them for the benefit of the team.
When each person knows what they want to achieve, it is easier for the team to succeed. Being objective makes it easier for one to play a critical role in the team's success.

8. Always motivated

For a team to be successful, each member must remain motivated. When everyone is motivated, they will always find a reason to work for the team. A good team member is always eager to do some work.
They report to work and do their best to finish the work on time and meet deadlines.
Motivation is one of the teamwork traits employers look for in prospective employees. When a team member is demotivated all the time, they don't give their best, which always affect the team's productivity.

9. You're reliable

A valuable team member should be reliable. Everyone wants to work with someone you can rely upon to finish tasks or to seek help from. You may have the skills and knowledge to do the job today and relax tomorrow.
So, if your contribution and output fluctuate from time to time, you're not reliable. A good team member gets the job done and is consistent every day. A dependable person provides teammates with the peace of mind knowing the work can be done regardless of the situation.

10. Truthful and honesty

Being honest means you are openly fair, just, and you take responsibility for your action. A good team member must be honest about every aspect of their job. For the team to achieve success, each team member must be truthful, sincere, trustworthy to themselves and their teammates.
An honest team member will always acknowledge their mistakes or when they are in the wrong. Honesty helps teams to prevent individual mistakes from becoming group failures.

11. Having a positive attitude

A good team member must be positive. Having a positive attitude means you are optimistic about something constructive, regardless of the circumstances. A positive team member inspires others to take on daunting work challenges.
Nothing can stop a team full of positive employees to achieve whatever results they want.
No one wants to work with a teammate who complains a lot and is always pessimistic. If you have a negative attitude, it can affect negatively on the team's performance. It can also destroy others' motivation.

12. Emphatic

Being emphatic means treating other people as you would like to be treated. Your colleagues will treat you with dignity only when you respect them. A good team member is always sensitive to the feelings of other members.

An emphatic member always respects others' viewpoints even when they disagree. Someone can still try to change others' perspectives, but they must do it with humility.

13. Being confident

One of the best qualities of a good team member is confidence. Confidence is a unique attribute that propels teams into success. Great team players have confidence in themselves and their teammates.

Many people at workplaces prefer working with confident workers rather than shy ones. Courage does not mean being arrogant and rude. It means having the positive energy required to push other members at work to achieve their full potential.

Confident workmates enjoy offering compliments to colleagues to improve their mood and make them feel better. They feel threatened by the success of their team members, but see it as inspirational.

A good team player is always confident about their ability to do things and do not seek others' validation to achieve their full potential.

14. Can multitask

One of the qualities of a good team member is the ability to multitask. They can focus on different projects without being distracted. The ability to multitask effectively allows team players to concentrate on their work and check out on others.

Multitasking makes it easy for a team member to play their part in ensuring the team's success.

It is the content of your character traits that determines whether you are a good team member or not. A good team member always works for the benefit of the team. Personal glorification and success don't come at the expense of team success.

2.8 TEAM LEADER

A team is only as strong as the person who leads it. Effective team **leadership** is an indispensable part of having a successful team, but it's an element that many teams lack. In fact, according to a Gallup poll, only about 35 percent of managers say they're engaged in their jobs. Too often, teams struggle with the challenges they face, from low productivity to **workplace conflict**, all of which threaten to derail projects. The solution involves having team leaders who can motivate and guide their team members. However, possessing those **leadership skills** doesn't always come naturally.

Companies without effective group leadership can quickly find themselves falling behind the competition. Teams with great leaders operate with a purpose, but they also do more than just hit project deadlines and company goals. They push the boundaries of what's possible and create a group unified in hearts and minds. As Babe Ruth once put it, "The way a team plays as a whole determines its success." Only the right team leader with the right skills to bring people together will be able to reach that next level of success.

Read on to find out more about team leadership, why it's needed, the traits good team leaders show, and the leadership skills you can start working on today to get the best results.

Team Leadership Definition

Team leadership is when a person gets people to work together so they can achieve a specific desired outcome. Team leaders use a variety of leadership skills such as vision and motivation to drive people to perform at their highest level. They also teach the group how to rely on one another's strengths so they can accomplish goals more efficiently and effectively.

Why Team Leadership Is Needed Today

Middle managers and team leaders face complex leadership challenges today. Much of the business world is in the middle of a shifting landscape not seen since the internet first burst onto the scene decades ago. A report from GitLab indicates that more than half of organizations allow for at least some remote work. This means instead of being located in the same office, many teams are spread out, with some team members living across the country from each other. Teams need great team leaders to coordinate their efforts, or they risk having everything fall apart through miscommunication and disorganization.

What Makes a Good Team Leader?

Top Qualities of a Team Leader

So, **what does leadership mean?** It's easy to say that teams need a great leader to show the way, but it's much more difficult to pinpoint the traits that make a leader great. Every team faces unique challenges, and not every person will have the **leadership qualities** that meet those challenges. Even so, the following tips can help people develop into good leaders who can help their teams be successful.

Set an Example First

A team leader needs to set an example for others to follow. If a leader only demands without showing, team members can end up lost or even resentful, thinking they're doing all the work while their team leader only bosses people around. Understand that team members are watching you.

If they see you putting in the time and effort to get things done, they'll follow suit. On the other hand, if they see their team leader slacking off, they'll have less desire to work hard.

Figure Out Your Leadership Style

While every team needs a good leader, that doesn't mean anyone can fill in. You need to develop the leadership style that works best for you and your team. Some styles are more direct and outgoing, which works great for extroverts. Others are quieter and less aggressive, a perfect fit for introverts. Do you want to develop a **servant leadership** approach and focus on serving your team? Or would you like to practice your public speaking skills to deliver an inspiring speech? Think about what your strengths are and how those strengths can motivate your team. That should help you develop the best style to reach your team's goals.

Show Confidence

Taking on the role of team leader doesn't throw away all the doubts and fears you may have. Effective team leaders deal with some heavy responsibilities, but they don't let that intimidate them. Senator John McCain once advised, "Some of us have more fears than others, but the one fear we must all guard against is the fear of ourselves." Project confidence in all you do, and your team will see that and feel confident along with you. You may not have all the answers, but you can feel confident tackling your biggest challenges knowing you'll still get the job done.

Team Leadership Skills

With those tips in mind, it's time to look at the team management skills that contribute to being a great team leader. The process of developing these qualities should be ongoing as no leader is perfect. Make a note of which skills you want to focus on in the weeks and months ahead.

1. Communication

A leader who can't communicate isn't much of a leader at all. Communication skills come in many forms, such as nonverbal, written, and public speaking. Many established business leaders say that public speaking is an essential skill everyone should develop. Warren Buffett once told Columbia University business students that simply learning communication skills like public speaking "can improve your value by 50 percent." Even if public speaking isn't your forte, casual conversations with team members can give you the opportunity to show your appreciation of their work and inspire them with newfound confidence. Additionally, learning more about how to balance introversion and extroversion by becoming an **ambivert** can drastically improve your communication abilities.

2. Constant Learning

With so much changing in the business world, an essential skill for **leadership and management** is constant learning. Leaders need to have an inquisitive mind eager to consume more information. Search for books and articles to read. Find topics that fascinate you. These topics don't have to be immediately related to the company you work for, but make sure to include reading material that will help expand upon and improve your skillset.

3. Delegation

A team leader can't do it all. You'll need to learn the fine art of delegation to achieve your team's goals. In the immortal words of Henry Ford, "Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs." **Delegation** saves time and keeps stress levels low for the entire team. It also shows your confidence in your team members as you trust them to handle important tasks and responsibilities.

4. Listening

Effective team leaders need to know what their team members are thinking, and the best way to do that comes from listening. Take the time to listen to understand people's complaints and concerns. By listening, you can pinpoint where problems might happen, or obstacles could spring up. You'll also have an easier time addressing concerns before they turn into full-fledged disasters. Team members will appreciate knowing that they have a leader who cares enough to hear them out.

5. Goal Setting

Poet Bill Copeland once said, "The trouble with not having a goal is that you can spend your life running up and down the field and never scoring." Teams can work hard every day, but if the team leader fails to set a goal properly, they risk having all that work go to waste. Create a clear vision for your team. Make sure they all understand what they're working toward. Outline the steps needed to reach it. Once team members see the big picture, they'll have a better grasp of the context of their work.

6. Trustworthiness

No one wants to work for an employer they don't trust, but unfortunately, it happens. Research from EY found that less than half of workers worldwide place "a great deal of trust" in their leaders. Executives, directors, and managers must earn the trust of their team members. Many of the above skills, such as communication and listening, go a long way toward establishing a high level of trust. Be upfront and transparent with team members. Don't keep them in the dark on important details involving company strategy.

As long as workers feel like their supervisor treats them with respect, integrity, and fairness, employees will trust their leaders to guide them where they need to go.

7. Positivity

People don't like to listen to doom and gloom all day. They want to hear good news and positivity, especially when it relates to their jobs.

Team leaders need to show this positive attitude to motivate and inspire their teams. Equally important is the need to show this positivity each day. A positive demeanor can quickly spread to the rest of the team. When everyone has a good attitude, productivity will increase, and people will feel more fulfilled and happy at work.

8. Self-Accountability

Just like team leaders must set a good example, they also need to hold themselves accountable. Team leaders who shift the blame to their team members will only lead to discord and conflict among their teams. Take full responsibility if things go wrong. Show that you're willing to learn and correct past mistakes. Team members will see this and practice self-accountability as well. If everyone does this, they'll lift each other to a higher level of performance.

9. Sharing Vision

Many team leaders find themselves getting pressure from above as well as below. They have their own bosses to answer to, so they have to show the willingness to be followers as well as leaders. Part of this responsibility includes understanding the **vision** for the company and getting others excited for it too. Understanding vision also includes understanding the role they and their team play in the big picture. To do this, team leaders will need to work closely with their bosses and their teams to catch the vision and impart its importance to others.

How to Work on Team Leadership Skills

Very few people start out as an **ideal team player**. It takes work and a constant desire for improvement to develop the necessary team leadership skills to lead a team to success. You can work on your own leadership qualities by following these tips.

- Identify one or two skills you want to improve.
- Set a goal to work toward (i.e. improve your listening skill by holding one-on-one meetings with your team members once a week).
- Read books about the skill(s) you want to get better at, including **leadership books**.
- Listen to business leadership podcasts.
- Practice team-building exercises.
- Set time aside every day to practice your skills.

Teams Need Great Leaders

Teams without effective leaders won't perform as well as those who have great team leadership. Your abilities as a team leader will depend on your dedication to developing the right skills to lead your team through the highs and lows they'll experience in the future. From problem-solving to decision-making, you'll be on the front lines as you set the example for your team members to follow. Work on these leadership traits now so you won't get caught unprepared later on.

Team leaders in the workplace

Team leaders are essential in a variety of workplace settings and are responsible for ensuring tasks and projects are completed by effectively delegating, overseeing, and guiding team members. While team members aren't often in a management position, they do lead teams of employees and perform the duties that come with that level of responsibility. Here we explore what a team leader is, what team leaders do on a daily basis, and the most important skills needed for team leaders to be effective in their positions.

Team leader definition

Team leaders direct and guide individuals with the intent of achieving a particular goal. For example, a marketing team leader may oversee a team throughout the completion and execution of a marketing strategy. These professionals aren't necessarily in a management role, but rather oversee a team and then report the team's progress and results to a manager.

Team leaders monitor the progress of a team throughout the duration and successful completion of a project. They may work as part of the team and complete tasks related to the project as well as lead the team.

These professionals must also be able to effectively motivate team members to accomplish goals and complete tasks in a timely and efficient manner. When team members are motivated to take part in the achievement of a goal, they are better able to function as a team and work towards a common solution.

What does a team leader do?

There are several responsibilities of a team leader in the workplace, including:

- Select team members who have a combination of strengths needed to achieve a particular goal.
- Create and implementing strategies that team members use to reach the goal.
- Delegate tasks to each team member based on their unique strengths and skill set.
- Offer training necessary to complete certain tasks in order to reach the goal.
- Provide regular support and encouragement to keep team members motivated and working toward a common goal.
- Oversee the day-to-day operations of a team.
- Monitor each team member's contributions and participation to ensure the project is on track to be completed in a timely manner.
- Create and distribute regular reports to management that show the progress of the project.
- Ensure resources are being used in an efficient manner.

Skills needed by team leaders

Team leaders need several skills to be successful in their positions. These skills include:

Communication skills

Team leaders must regularly communicate with team members, management, and clients to ensure everyone is on the same page and understands the goals and progress of the project. Leaders should be excellent at communicating in various forms, including verbal and written communication, to ensure information is presented in a way that is easily understood. They should also have good listening skills to ensure that team members feel heard and that project goals and expectations are clear.

Other communication skills that team leaders should possess include:

- Empathy.
- Nonverbal communication.
- Receiving and giving feedback.
- Responsiveness.
- Active listening.
- The ability to adapt the communication style to meet the needs of the audience.

Motivation

Team leaders must be able to motivate their team members to complete tasks in a successful and timely manner. They should encourage excitement and passion and provide guidance on how to be more productive. Team leaders are also responsible for training and mentoring team members as well as recognizing good work and offering recognition or rewards for accomplishing challenging tasks.

Relationship building

Leaders need to be able to build quality relationships with team members, managers, and clients. This includes fostering trust and respect and showing empathy to team members.

Leaders are also responsible for managing group relationships and conflicts that may arise and should be able to effectively diffuse challenging situations and help others unite as they work towards a common goal.

Relationship-building skills team leaders should possess include:

- Emotional intelligence.
- Listening skills.
- Networking skills.
- Conflict resolution.
- Trust.
- Consistency.
- Stress management.

Decision-making skills

Team leaders must regularly make decisions to ensure projects are on the right track and team members are guided in the right direction. Good decision-making skills ensure the right choices are made to promote a more effective team and the successful completion of a project. Leaders should be able to assess all of the information available and make informed decisions based on effective reasoning.

Responsibility

Being a team leader means taking responsibility for both your own work and the work of the members of your team. Being willing to take responsibility and hold one's self accountable is essential to being an effective leader. Not only will this help to ensure tasks are completed successfully, but it will also foster trust and respect from managers and team members.

Goal orientation

Leaders are willing to take charge and do what needs to be done to reach goals. They must be able to look at a situation from a variety of perspectives and decide the best actions that will ensure a goal is met. They should also be able to inspire and push team members towards achieving goals and elicit an excitement that keeps employees motivating to constantly move forward.

Fairness

Team leaders are responsible for assigning tasks to team members and must be able to do so in a fair and consistent manner. Assigning one team member an excess amount of tasks and others fewer tasks or showing favoritism among team members can create hostility and lead to projects not being completed in a successful and efficient manner. Team members should be given an even amount of tasks to complete and should be treated in the same way to ensure they feel respected and part of the team.

Leadership styles in the workplace

Many professionals participate in leadership roles at least once in their careers. Whether you're in charge of a meeting or you're leading a team of employees through the completion of a project, understanding the different styles of leadership and the type you most identify with can help strengthen your leadership abilities. Here we explore what leadership styles are, why they are important, and the most common leadership types seen in the workplace.

What is a leadership style and why is it important?

A leadership style is a way a person approaches giving direction, implementing goals, and inspiring and motivating individuals to take action towards those goals. Styles of leadership can vary between individuals and are largely based on each person's unique personality, behaviors, preferences, and character. How someone leads greatly impacts their overall success as a leader as well as the success of those they are overseeing.

Leadership styles were first introduced by psychologist Kurt Lewin in 1939. Since then, these styles have been used to identify the leadership types of those in authoritative positions and help leaders recognize and hone their unique styles of leadership.

There are several advantages of knowing and understanding your leadership style, including that it:

- Gives you a better understanding of your strengths and weaknesses in a leadership position.
- Allows you to strategically use your strengths in your leadership role.
- Provides you with a better comprehension of your perspective and values in the workplace.
- Enables you to more effectively communicate with your team.
- Offers you insight into the best work environment for your unique leadership style so you can better choose your place of employment.
- Allows you to more efficiently handle challenges by offering solutions that best correlate with your unique leadership style.

Most common styles of leadership

The following are the most common leadership types seen in the workplace:

Autocratic

This type of leadership style is when the person in charge makes decisions with little to no consultation with others. For example, a leader may decide that their team will work on projects from 2 to 5 p.m. each day despite whether team members have other obligations during this timeframe. This type of leadership is ideal during times of crisis or when there is little time for consulting others when a decision needs to be made.

Servant

A servant-style leader is one who puts the needs and satisfaction of their team members first. This type of leadership is excellent in situations when team morale is low or in nonprofit settings where individuals are an essential component of the organization's mission.

Pacesetter

A pacesetter leadership style is when the leader is mostly focused on results and encourages their team to work quickly to get fast results. They may set the standard high for their employees and expect their team members to accomplish goals along a set timeline. This leadership type works well in fast-paced work settings where employees need constant motivation and energy to get the job done.

Democratic

A democratic-style leader is one who considers the feedback of team members when making decisions. This type of leadership allows employees to feel heard and to regularly contribute to their projects at work.

Transactional

A leader with a transactional leadership style rewards their team members based on the work they accomplish. For example, members of a sales team may be awarded a bonus for bringing in a set number of sales, but a team member won't receive a bonus if this number isn't reached. This leadership style is especially effective in work settings that require ample motivation and use incentives to encourage employees to achieve their work goals.

Transformational

A transformational leader is an individual who is focused on the big picture and making lasting transformations within the organization. They are often concerned with long-term goals and work with their team to motivate them to achieve these goals. Transformational leaders are authentic, humble, and motivational and inspire others to do their best.

Laissez-faire

Laissez-faire is French for 'hands-off,' and that's exactly what this type of leader is like with their team. Laissez-fair leaders delegate tasks to employees and offer little or no supervision in the completion of these tasks. This type of leadership is ideal in situations when the team is very experienced and requires little guidance when completing tasks and accomplishing goals.

Coach

A coach-style leader is one who works to identify their employees' strengths and weaknesses and uses this information to help each team member improve in their work. Coach leaders offer feedback at regular intervals and develop a motivating and positive workplace. For example, a coach-style leader may create separate teams of employees with similar strengths and give each team a goal to work on that best caters to these strengths.

Bureaucratic

Bureaucratic leaders are those who follow company policies and guidelines closely and rarely work outside of these procedures and rules. They emphasize the need to work on fixed duties and provide each employee with a specific set of responsibilities that they will be responsible for on a regular basis. This type of leadership allows for little creativity and, while bureaucratic leaders may allow employees to make suggestions and voice their concerns, the leader puts the company policies and procedures first.

Tips for improving your leadership style

There are several things you can to do to improve upon your unique leadership style, including:

- **Identify your leadership type.** Before you can improve your leadership style, you first need to know what it is. There are several online assessments that offer insight into your unique leadership type that can help you better understand your management and leadership skills.
- **Assess your strengths and weaknesses.** Your unique strengths and weaknesses will play a major role in how you lead. Take time to identify these and focus on your strengths when leading while also taking time to improve upon your weaknesses.
- **Establish goals for your leadership development.** Just as you'd set goals for your team, you should also establish goals for yourself when it comes to improving as a leader. For example, if you want to improve your ability to delegate tasks, make it a point to

spend more time when doing so and get feedback from your team as to how your delegation has impacted their work.

- **Work with a mentor.** Working with a mentor is a great way to gain valuable insight and learn by example.

2.9 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What does Teamwork mean?
2. State the significance of teamwork
3. Mention various stages of team development
4. Discuss Tuck mans model of team development

5 Give examples of teamwork at different stages of team development

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What does a team leader do?
2. Write some silent features of team
3. List down Glenn Parker's list of characteristics of effective team
4. Discuss some top qualities of a good team member
5. Why team leader is needed?

Multiple choice question :

1. ______________ leaders are those who follow company policies and guidelines closely and rarely work outside of these procedures and rules.

A. Bureaucratic

B. Autocratic

C. Formal

D. Informal

2. A ___________ leadership style is when the leader is mostly focused on results and encourages their team to work quickly to get fast results.

A. Democratic

B. Pacesetter

C. Servant

D. Coach

3. Team leaders must be able to ____________ their team members to complete tasks in a successful and timely manner.

A. Demotivate

B. Free

C. **Motivate**

D. Restrict

4. One of the qualities of a good team member is their ability to ____________ well with your teammates.

A. Teach

B. Punish

C. Deal

D. communicate

5. The _________ stage of team development is punctuated by excitement and anticipation.

A. **Forming**

B. Storming
C. Norming
D. Performing

2.10 REFERENCE

1) The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You by John C. Maxwell
2) Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts by Brené Brown
3) The Mentor Leader: Secrets to Building People and Teams That Win Consistently by Tony Dungy
4) Minority Leader: How to Build Your Future and Make Real Change by Stacey Abrahms

UNIT 3- NETWORKING MAGIC : CONNECTING WITH CONFIDENCE

STRUCTURE

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this Students will be able to

- Define the significance of planning
- Understand the methods of greeting people
- Learn how to prepare and practice conversation starters
- Explain how to plan for an exit strategy.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

We already know what planning is, it is the deciding of what is to be done in advance. It is the groundwork for all future plans of the organization. Planning bridges the gap between where the organization currently find itself and where it wishes to be.

So in essence business planning comprises of setting objectives for the organization and developing a plan of action to achieve these objectives.

Once the objectives are set, the managers and workers can have a clear vision of what to work towards.

Managers are a very important part of the function of business planning. Planning requires innovation, creativity and multi-tasking from the managers. And planning is a function that managers of all levels must perform, i.e upper, middle and lower management.

3.2.1 PLANNING PROCESS

Importance of Business Planning

Planning is an important function of management, it tells the manager where the organization should be headed. It also helps the organization reduce uncertainty. Let us take a look at some important functions of planning.

1] Planning provides a sense of Direction

Planning means coming up with a predetermined action plan for the organization. It actually states in advance what and how the work is to be done. This helps provide the workers and the managers with a sense of direction, a guidance in a way. Without planning their actions would be uncoordinated and unorganized.

2] Planning reduces Uncertainty

Planning not only sets objectives but also anticipates any future changes in the industry or the organization. So it allows the managers to prepare for these changes, and allow them to deal with the uncertainties. Planning takes into consideration past events and trends and prepares the managers to deal with any uncertain events.

3] Planning reduces Wastefulness

The detailed plans made keep in mind the needs of all the departments. This ensures that all the departments are on the same page about the plan and that all their activities are coordinated. There is clarity in thought which leads to clarity in action. All work is carried out without interruptions or waste of time or resources,

4] Planning invokes Innovation

Planning actually involves a lot of innovation on the part of the managers. Being the first function of management it is a very difficult activity. It encourages the manager to broaden their horizons and forces them to think differently. So the managers have to be creative, perceptive and innovative.

5] Makes Decision=Making Easier

In business planning the goals of the organization have been set, an action plan developed and even predictions have been made for future events. This makes it easier for all managers across all levels to make decisions with some ease. The decision-making process also becomes faster.

6] Establishes Standards

Once the business planning is done, the managers now have set goals and standards. This provides the manager's standards against which they can measure actual performances. This will help the organization measure if the goals have been met or not. So planning is a prerequisite to controlling.

Fig 3.1 Business Plan

Limitations of Planning

While business planning is important and a requisite for every organization, it does have some limitations. Let us take a look at some limitations of business planning.

1] Rigidity

Once the planning function is complete and the action plan is set, then the manager tends to only follow the plan.

The manager may not be in a position to change the plan according to circumstances. Or the manager may be unwilling to change the plan. This sort of rigidity is not ideal for an organization.

2] Not ideal in Dynamic Conditions

In an economic environment rarely anything is stagnant or static. Economic, political, environmental, legal conditions keep changing. In such a dynamic environment it becomes challenging to predict future changes. And if a manager cannot forecast accurately, the plan may fail.

3] Planning can also reduce creativity

While making a plan takes creativity after that managers blindly follow the plan. They do not change the plan according to the dynamic nature of the business. Sometimes they do not even make the appropriate suggestions to upper management. The work becomes routine.

4] Planning is Expensive

Planning is a cost-consuming process. Since it is an intellectual and creative process, specialized professionals must be hired for the job. Also, it involves a lot of research and facts collection and number crunching. At certain times the cost of the planning process can outweigh its benefits.

5] Not Completely Accurate

When planning we have to forecast the future and predict certain upcoming events in the organization and the industry. So, of course, there cannot be hundred per cent certainty in such cases. So it can be said that business planning lacks accuracy

types of Plan

Planning is one of the most important and the first function of management. It is an activity that managers of all levels have to perform. So according to the level of management, the type of plan will differ. Let us see the different types of plan in management.

Types of Plan

Planning is a pervasive function of management, it is extensive in its scope. So all managers across all levels participate in planning. However, the plans made by the top level manager will differ from the ones that lower managers make.

Plans also differ from what they seek to achieve and what methods will be used to achieve them. So let us look at the types of plans that managers deal with.

Fig 3.2Planning

Browse more Topics under Planning

- Introduction, Meaning, Importance, Features & Limitations of Planning
- Planning Process

Objectives

This is the first step in planning the action plan of the organization. Objectives are the basics of every company and the desired objective/result that the company plans on achieving, so they are the endpoint of every planning activity.

For example one of the objectives of an organization could be to increase sales by 20%. So the manager will plan all activities of the organization with this end objective in mind. While framing the objectives of the organization some points should be kept in mind.

- Objectives should be framed for a single activity in mind.
- They should be result oriented. The objective must not frame any actions
- Objectives should not be vague, they should be quantitative and measurable.
- They should not be unrealistic. Objectives must be achievable.

Planning

- Planning Process
- Introduction, Meaning, Importance, Features, and Limitations of Planning

Strategy

This obviously is the next type of plan, the next step that follows objectives. A strategy is a complete and all-inclusive plan for achieving said objectives. A strategy is a plan that has three specific dimensions

i. Establishing long-term objectives
ii. Selecting a specific course of action
iii. allocating the necessary resources needed for the plan

Forming strategy is generally reserved for the top level of management. It actually defines all future decisions and the company's long-term scope and general direction.

Policy

Policies are generic statements, which are basically a guide to channelize energies towards a particular strategy. It is an organization's general way of understanding, interpreting and implementing strategies. Like for example, most companies have a return policy or recruitment policy or pricing policy etc.

Policies are made across all levels of management, from major policies at the top-most level to minor policies. The managers need to form policies to help the employees navigate a situation with predetermined decisions. They also help employees to make decisions in unexpected situations.

Procedure

Procedures are the next types of plan. They are a stepwise guide for the routine to carry out the activities. These stepwise sequences are to be followed by all the employees so the activities can be fulfilled in an organized manner.

The procedures are described in a chronological order. So when the employees follow the instructions in the order and completely, the success of the activity is pretty much guaranteed.

Take for example the procedure of admission of a student in a college. The procedure starts with filling out an application form. It will be followed by a collection of documents and sorting the applications accordingly.

Rules

Rules are very specific statements that define an action or non-action. Also, rules allow for no flexibility at all, they are final. All employees of the organization must compulsorily follow and implement the rules. Not following rules can have severe consequences.

Rules create an environment of discipline in the organization. They guide the actions and the behaviour of all the employees of the organization. The rule of "no smoking" is one such example.

Program

Programmes are an in-depth statement that outlines a company's policies, rules, objectives, procedures etc. These programmes are important in the implementation of all types of plan. They create a link between the company's objectives, procedures and rules.

Primary programmes are made at the top level of management. To support the primary program all managers will make other programs at the middle and lower levels of management.

Methods

Methods prescribe the ways in which in which specific tasks of a procedure must be performed. Also, methods are very specific and detailed instructions on how the employees must perform every task of the planned procedure. So managers form methods to formalize routine jobs.

Methods are very important types of plan for an organization. They help in the following ways

- give clear instructions to the employees, removes any confusion
- Ensures uniformity in the actions of the employees
- Standardizes the routine jobs
- Acts as an overall guide for the employees and the managers

Budget

A budget is a statement of expected results the managers expect from the company. Budgets are also a quantitative statement, so they are expressed in numerical terms. A budget quantifies the forecast or future of the organization.

There are many types of budgets that managers make. There is the obvious financial budget, that forecasts the profit of the company. Then there are operational budgets generally prepared by lower-level managers. Cash budgets monitor the cash inflows and outflows of the company.

Planning Process

The planning function of management is one of the most crucial ones. It involves setting the goals of the company and then managing the resources to achieve such goals. As you can imagine it is a systematic process involving eight well thought out steps. Let us take a look at the planning process.

Fig 3.3 Planning Process

1] Recognizing Need for Action

An important part of the planning process is to be aware of the business opportunities in the firm's external environment as well as within the firm. Once such opportunities get recognized the managers can recognize the actions that need to be taken to realize them. A realistic look must be taken at the prospect of these new opportunities and SWOT analysis should be done.
Say for example the government plans on promoting cottage industries in semi-urban areas. A firm can look to explore this opportunity.
What are the Types of Plan?

2] Setting Objectives

This is the second and perhaps the most important step of the planning process. Here we establish the objectives for the whole organization and also individual departments. Organizational objectives provide a general direction, objectives of departments will be more planned and detailed.
Objectives can be long term and short term as well. They indicate the end result the company wishes to achieve. So objectives will percolate down from the managers and will also guide and push the employees in the correct direction.
Importance, Features, and Limitation of Planning here in detail.

3] Developing Premises

Planning is always done keeping the future in mind, however, the future is always uncertain. So in the function of management certain assumptions will have to be made. These assumptions are the premises. Such assumptions are made in the form of forecasts, existing plans, past policies, etc.
These planning premises are also of two types – internal and external. External assumptions deal with factors such as political environment, social environment, the advancement of technology, competition, government policies, etc. Internal assumptions deal with policies, availability of resources, quality of management, etc.
These assumptions being made should be uniform across the organization. All managers should be aware of these premises and should agree with them.

4] Identifying Alternatives

The fourth step of the planning process is to identify the alternatives available to the managers. There is no one way to achieve the objectives of the firm, there is a multitude of choices. All of these alternative courses should be identified. There must be options available to the manager.
Maybe he chooses an innovative alternative hoping for more efficient results. If he does not want to experiment he will stick to the more routine course of action. The problem with this step is not finding the alternatives but narrowing them down to a reasonable amount of choices so all of them can be thoroughly evaluated.

5] Examining Alternate Course of Action

The next step of the planning process is to evaluate and closely examine each of the alternative plans. Every option will go through an examination where all there pros and cons will be weighed. The alternative plans need to be evaluated in light of the organizational objectives.
For example, if it is a financial plan. Then it that case its risk-return evaluation will be done. Detailed calculation and analysis are done to ensure that the plan is capable of achieving the objectives in the best and most efficient manner possible.

6] Selecting the Alternative

Finally, we reach the decision making stage of the planning process. Now the best and most feasible plan will be chosen to be implemented. The ideal plan is the most profitable one with the least amount of negative consequences and is also adaptable to dynamic situations.

The choice is obviously based on scientific analysis and mathematical equations. But a managers intuition and experience should also play a big part in this decision. Sometimes a few different aspects of different plans are combined to come up with the one ideal plan.

7] Formulating Supporting Plan

Once you have chosen the plan to be implemented, managers will have to come up with one or more supporting plans. These secondary plans help with the implementation of the main plan. For example plans to hire more people, train personnel, expand the office etc are supporting plans for the main plan of launching a new product. So all these secondary plans are in fact part of the main plan.

8] Implementation of the Plan

And finally, we come to the last step of the planning process, implementation of the plan. This is when all the other functions of management come into play and the plan is put into action to achieve the objectives of the organization. The tools required for such implementation involve the types of plans- procedures, policies, budgets, rules, standards etc.

3.2 MEETING PLANS

Simply put, a meeting plan establishes what needs to be done before, during, and after a meeting. Basically, it brings everyone on the same page on the most important topics.

A meeting plan is all about what you want from the meeting and the results you want at the end of the meeting. This information gives you a clear focus that guides your meeting structure.

Some of the essential points that need to be covered in a meeting plan are:

- What key things need to be accomplished during the meeting?
- What’s the agenda of the meeting?
- Who’ll be attending the meeting?
- How long would the meeting be?

These things might sound basic, but you’d be surprised to know that they are often forgotten. After all, we’ve all been to meetings that stretch on for hours, go over irrelevant topics and leave us in a zombie-like daze.

Okay, so now that you know the basics of a meeting plan, it’s time to learn the four things that you HAVE to mention in the plan (if you don’t want it to be a disaster). Let’s roll!

How to Plan Meetings Effectively? Follow these Steps!

Step 1. Mention goals of the meeting

You can’t cover everything happening in a company in one single meeting and you obviously don’t want your meeting to be derailed.

So, first off, decide what you want to accomplish by that particular meeting and then set achievable goals to keep your meeting as focused as possible.

Fig 3.4 . Mention goals of the meeting

You might want to develop a plan, solve a problem, evaluate risk, or some combination of the above – whatever it is, put it into the meeting plan so that the participants are more prepared when they arrive!

Step 3. Write down topics that need to be discussed

Your meeting needs to be on point. Period.

In the meeting plan, specify all the important topics that need to be discussed in the meeting. This will give the participants a clear idea about the meeting and they can prepare for it accordingly.

This way, everything that needs to be covered will be covered without any issue, and any time in the meeting will be a time well spent.

Step 4. The timings of the meeting

If you want your meeting to be meaningful and not overly rushed, you need to think about the time available and plan your meeting accordingly.

Here's how you can do that: When you're defining your goals and objectives, evaluate the complexity of every topic that'll be discussed in the meeting and then mention it in your meeting plan.

(Keep in mind that certain topics might lead to large discussions while others may be straightforward!)

People like to know what's coming and if you start and end your meeting on time, your staff can plan their work around the meeting and be their most productive self!

Meeting plans are critical documents, and you know that by now. The plan demonstrates that you are someone who takes the time to thoughtfully plan a meeting – but ONLY if it looks good.

No matter how much thought and time you spent in creating your meeting plan, if it looks like a dull piece of document, consider all your efforts wasted. It's just how it is.

When you create a good meeting plan, your team members are more likely to understand the plan, and have meaningful and actionable conversations at the meeting. (That's the dream, right?)

Best Practices to Plan your Meetings Effectively!

There are always a few pointers and tips you need to keep in mind while setting up a meeting plan to ensure that it runs at a good pace and covers all the important points without wasting time.

What are they? Let's take a look!

1. Decide Whether the Meeting is Needed

Before actually setting up a meeting, you need to decide if the meeting is really needed. Because let's face it, no one really likes going to meetings.

So ask yourself, 'can this all be put in an email instead?' If the answer is yes, then you would be doing everyone a favor by sending an email and not setting up a meeting.

2. Structure your Meeting

Every meeting needs to have a rough structure to be followed. So make sure to create a meeting agenda with objectives, expectations, guidelines, timings, and more. Write them in bullet points so that it's easier for your team members to skim through them.

3. Attach Supporting Documents

If you have any documents that are going to be discussed in the meetings, then make sure to send them to your meeting participants a day in advance or at least a few hours in advance. This gives them time to go through the meeting material to be discussed and be prepared for participating in your meeting.

4. Start On Time

Nobody likes wasting their time waiting for people to turn up. So the last thing you want to do is be late for your own meetings. That's why it's crucial that you make sure to always start your meetings on time.

5. Keep it Short and Simple

If there is anything people hate more than meetings, it is long meetings. So keep your meetings short, simple, and to the point. Make sure that the message is conveyed in a short time so that no one has to linger around for longer than they're required.

6. Seek Inputs from Team Members

You're conducting a meeting and not a lecture, so it's crucial that you encourage participation from different people.

Seek their inputs, ask for suggestions and ideas, address their issues and concerns, and encourage questions. This will create a healthy environment for discussions and make your meetings more engaging.

7. Summarize

Always close your meeting with a quick and concise summary of whatever was discussed. This is to ensure that everyone leaves the meeting with the same understanding.

8. Finish On Time

Lastly, just as important as it is to start your meeting on time, it is also equally important to end your meeting on time. Nothing more, nothing less.

Wrapping Up

No one wants to sit through boring, unproductive, time-suck meetings where nothing gets accomplished.

Because these meetings cause more problems than they solve. They often lead to rework, budget overruns, poor deliverables, and missed deadlines. What a nightmare.

See how important hosting a good meeting is?

Fortunately, with a meeting plan in the back of your pocket, you can host meetings that deliver tangible results, a list of great ideas to pursue, and a shared understanding of the work ahead.

So, in the spirit of efficiency, saved time, and money, it's time to create a meeting plan and say goodbye to terrible meetings!

Meetings—there can be too many. Meetings are sometimes held to discuss when to meet: it can feel absurd. However, meetings are not some useless artifact from business past.

They are an important means of communication. That’s why a planning meeting in project management is key to kicking off a successful project.
Like any meeting, there are guidelines that must be followed. There must be an agenda, and only those people who need to be there should be in attendance. If not, well, that’s why meetings get a bad name. The more prepared you are, the more productive the meeting and the more efficient your project planning.
That’s why we’ve broken down a good planning meeting into the core items you should include to make it thorough and beneficial. We’ve even included a checklist you can use to make sure you’ve not neglected anything in your meeting.

What Is the Purpose of a Planning Meeting?

The obvious reason to have a planning meeting is to create a plan and get buy-in from the team. It’s the first step in developing a plan and requires that certain questions be answered, such as how do we achieve this goal? What do we know already about it? Who is going to be responsible for what?
When the planning meeting is complete, there should be a few deliverables, such as a rough outline of the plan that has been quickly sketched after answering the questions above.
There must also be some clarity about who is going to be doing what in the project.
It doesn’t hurt if you can begin to identify dependencies, what resources you’ll need and which you don’t already have. Plus, you’ll have questions that need answering or require further investigation and research.
A general understanding of what the plan’s scope is should also be established. Everybody present should have a good idea of the plan. Get feedback to make sure those parameters were clear in the planning meeting and, if they’re not, encourage questions from the group until they are. This includes how individuals will coordinate with others on the team.

Key Elements of a Planning Meeting

A planning meeting is only as good as its parts. Those parts are what you have to prepare before even calling the meeting. You want to have all your ducks in a row, so to speak, so that the meeting goes off without a hitch and the plan and team responsibilities are well-outlined. Therefore, you’ll want to make sure you’ve addressed each of the items below.

Vision, Goals & Objectives

Before you can have a plan, you must have a target. In other words, what are the goals and objectives you want to achieve. To figure that out requires asking yourself simple but important questions, such as what are you trying to do and what problems are you trying to solve?
Answering these questions will define the vision, which is an important lodestar to follow when implementing the plan. This will also give stakeholders and team members a ramp to onboard to the project. This leads to creating a business case, aligning the project to the organization’s overall business objectives and identifying the project’s benefits.

Critical Success Factors

Once you have a vision, goals and objectives, you’ll need to qualify that vision, goals and objectives. What does that mean?
According to D. Ronald Daniel, who first developed the concept, it’s “the limited number of areas in which results, if they are satisfactory, will ensure successful competitive performance for the organization. They are the few key areas where things must go right for the business to flourish. If results in these areas are not adequate, the organization’s

efforts for the period will be less than desired."

In other words, what are the things you can't fail at doing. These basic components of your plan must be defined and clear to all. These include the deliverable for the project, an agreed upon budget and schedule, etc.

Having critical success factors in place means that you can prioritize not only the planning process but the project execution. You'll know who the leaders are, where to put your resources and how to adjust your plan to make sure those critical success factors are always safeguarded.

Key Performance Indicators

A key performance indicator or KPI is something that is of a measurable value. It shows how effective a project is working towards meeting its key business objectives. It's a way to evaluate success, but in order to do that you first must determine what the KPIs are for the project.

Therefore, the planning meeting must address the project KPIs and, more specifically, what everyone on the project team is responsible for doing in order to achieve those KPIs. Without setting a target to hit and explaining that to the team, as well as their part in reaching that target, the project is less likely to succeed. This is why it is an essential part of the planning meeting.

Key Issues

Then there are the key issues: the things most pressing that must be immediately addressed. Before moving forward with the project or even the planning, there are likely obstacles that must be cleared. This is the time in which they are identified, and a decision is made regarding the resolution and who will lead that charge.

Hitting these points will provide a basic outline for a one-day planning meeting. Of course, you can and might need to have more time devoted to the planning, but that will depend more on the size of your team than the project. Regardless of how big or small your team is, in order to make the planning meeting more productive you'll want to include them prior to meeting and get their ideas and comments.

ProjectManager Turns a Planning Meeting Into a Plan

You've met, you've defined the project and now comes the making of a real plan to incorporate all you've talked about. That's where ProjectManager can help. ProjectManager is an online project planning software that can help you plan, schedule and manage projects from start to finish.

Easy Imports

You have a vision, goals and objectives, but how do you break those down into steps that will lead to the final deliverable of the project? Well, to begin with, use a work breakdown structure, which will help you work back from the end of the project to all the tasks that are necessary to get there. This is basically creating a task list that can then be uploaded into ProjectManager and will open up as a new project.

Set Dependencies, Deadlines & Milestones

Not all tasks can be completed at once, some can't start until others are finished, so you need to organize them. ProjectManager simplifies this process. Add task durations and the populate a timeline on your Gantt chart tool.

Now you can link dependent tasks, set milestones to break the project into phases and even begin assigning team members all from the Gantt.

Turn project plans into actionable schedules with ProjectManager's online Gantt

chartsLearn more
Task Management Tools for Managing Work
Once a team member is invited to ProjectManager they can be assigned tasks. The tasks can have directions from the manager, to-do lists and include unlimited file and image attachments. But that's just the start.
Different people working on the project work in different ways, which is why ProjectManager has multiple project views. Team members might prefer a task list or even a calendar view.
Once they start executing tasks, though, it can be hard to focus on priorities and control workflow. The kanban view keeps team members working on just those jobs that they have the resources and capacity to accomplish. Managers get transparency into the production cycle too.
Organize work with visual columns and cards to keep every productiveLearn more
Of course, team members are most productive when they're working together, which is why ProjectManager fosters collaboration. Tasks can be commented on and other team members who aren't assigned to that task can be tagged and brought into the conversation.
Track & Report on the Plan
Managers want to track team progress and can do this on a high-level with a real-time dashboard or go deep into the data with one-click reporting. Project Manager is the perfect tool to turn plans into reality and should be on the agenda of every planning meeting.

3.3 GREETING METHODS

Greetings are salutations people say to others when meeting them. As a professional, it's important to know the right greeting for different occasions. There are several greetings for speech and writing, and knowing when and how to use them effectively can help you start conversations effortlessly and build relationships with others. In this article, we discuss examples of greetings for professional and informal situations.
Importance of reviewing examples of greetings
There are many examples of greetings for different audiences and scenarios, and knowing which one to use is vital for proper communication. One important reason to know the right greeting is that the way you interact with a colleague differs from how you talk to a potential employer or client. When you want to greet an employer, you want to maintain a level of formality. The greeting when you meet a colleague who is a friend or neighbour is going to be more informal.
Besides differences in formality, people don't enjoy repeating themselves when they first meet others. Knowing the right greetings for specific situations can help you avoid repeating the same phrases when others greet you, making you a better communicator.
Formal greetings for speech
When you're in a professional or work environment, it's often required to maintain a formal tone. Formal greetings are the preferred method of salutation for interviews, business meetings and discussions with senior management and other high-ranking officials. You can also use them when discussing with vendors and suppliers, elderly people, strangers and new colleagues. Examples of formal greetings include:

1. Good morning/good afternoon/good evening
These greeting examples are used to salute people depending on the time of day. Good

morning is typically used to greet people from dawn to noon, while good afternoon applies from noon to dusk or 6:00 p.m. You can use good evening after sunset. While professionals may use these greetings for business communications, they're also suitable for informal situations.

People use them to greet customers, colleagues, neighbours, family members and pedestrians they meet on the road. If you enter an office, hotel or restaurant, the variation of this greeting suitable for the time of day is most likely what people at the establishment are going to use to welcome you. You can also use it as a salutation in letters, followed by sir/madam, especially if you don't know the recipient's name.

2. How do you do?

This formal phrase is one of the most appropriate for greeting people you meet for the first time. People often accompany the greeting with a response such as I'm doing well, thank you or fine, thank you and a handshake. Sometimes, the person you greet repeats the greeting in response, especially if they think you used it as a statement rather than a question. This greeting is ideal for formal events, such as conferences, business dinners and other professional gatherings.

3. Pleased to meet you/nice to meet you

This greeting is another great example ideal for formal occasions, especially when the person is an older person or an admired senior colleague you're meeting for the first time. The usual response to this is to repeat the greeting or its variations. Note that this greeting often follows a brief introductory handshake.

4. How have you been?

This phrase is ideal for greeting someone you met a long time ago. It's only appropriate for greeting people you've met before and have a formal but cordial relationship, as it's an unobtrusive way of asking how they've been doing since the last time you saw each other. The typical response to this salutation can be I'm fine, and how are you or I'm very well, thank you.

Formal greetings for emails and letters

Besides knowing the right greetings for spoken language, it's also essential to understand how to greet people in writing. As a professional, your job may likely involve writing letters and emails, and these formal correspondences require the appropriate salutation. Whether you're discussing projects with your supervisor or following up on job applications, here are four formal greeting examples for emails and letters:

1. Dear sir or madam

You can use this greeting when emailing a company for the first time or contacting a department in your organisation about an issue. The greeting is suitable for occasions where you don't know the name or title of the recipient and you want to maintain a professional tone in your conversation.

Not only is this greeting short and direct, but it's also polite and saves you from misrepresenting the person's name, gender or title in their organisation. It's always better to include some personality in your business correspondences, so attempt to get the recipient's name or title. Use this greeting only as a last resort if your research didn't turn up the name of the recipient.

2. Dear [title]

Dear, followed by the title of the person you're writing a formal letter or email to, is an ideal form of salutation. For example, you can start the letter with Dear Mr Tony Lee,

stating their first and last name to add more personality to your message. You can also consider using the person's official title, such as Professor or Doctor.
This salutation is suitable when sending emails to people in academia and other fields that have professional titles. After building a relationship with the recipient, it's acceptable to salute them with their title, such as Mr, Ms, Dr and first name, in subsequent emails.

3. To the hiring manager

If you're sending an application to a company or following up with one, you can use this greeting to address your emails and letters to the human resources department. This greeting is especially appropriate if you know that the company has a dedicated human resources manager who handles recruitment decisions.
If you find out that the hiring process goes through the manager of a specific department or team leader, look for their name and use that in your salutation. For example, you can address the email to the marketing manager if you're applying for a marketing role and you know that the unit head handles the recruitment process. That way, you can demonstrate your research skills and enthusiasm for the role.

4. To whom it may concern

This generic greeting is suitable for addressing emails to strangers. While it has no personality, it's a perfect way to address a letter that is going to a group of people. For example, you can use it as a greeting when writing to an entire department. It's also ideal for making enquiries or lodging a complaint to an organisation that has no dedicated customer service unit. You can also use this salutation when you're following up on a job application if the company uses a hiring team rather than a recruitment manager.

Informal greetings

Informal greetings are ideal for situations where the atmosphere is cordial. You can use it when you're having a casual meeting with colleagues, such as during a coffee break or networking event. These salutations are also ideal for greeting friends, family and neighbours or even meeting with your team in the office. Here are four examples of informal greetings:

1. Hello/hi/hey

Hello, hi and hey are the most common informal greetings. You can use them to greet someone you may or may not know outside of the office. Hello is ideal for getting someone's attention, especially if you're not physically close to them. It's also appropriate for greeting someone over the phone. These salutations are also suitable for starting business conversations, such as emails, if you have a relationship with the recipient. Hey is most appropriate for greeting people you already know, although you can also use it for strangers if you pronounce it lightly.

2. How are you doing?/how's it going?

These two are also common informal greetings that people use as a follow-up to hello, hi or hey. Typical responses are fine, thanks or good, how are you? These two greetings are best for people you already know because they're a more cordial way of saying how are you and inviting the other person to share some information about themselves.

3. Good to see you

This greeting and its variations, nice to meet you or it's great to see you, are used to greet people you haven't seen in a long time. They are also ideal for saluting people you meet unexpectedly.
People often use these greetings to build rapport or start a conversation after a short

initial greeting, such as hi.

4. It's been a while

You can use this greeting and its variant long time no see, to greet a friend or someone you last saw a long time ago. Ideally, they follow initial greetings and precede the person's name in a conversation. You can use these salutations to start a conversation and encourage the other person to chat with you about events that happened since you last met.

3.4 PREPARED AND PRACTICED CONVERSATIONS

A self-introduction explains who you are, what you do and what others need to know about you. You should provide a self-introduction any time you meet someone new and don't have a third party to introduce you. Offer a self-introduction when you are:

Beginning an interview

Attending a hiring event

Networking with new connections

Giving a presentation

Meeting people at a trade show

A self-introduction should include your name and occupation (or desired occupation) and key facts that will help you make an impression on the person you're speaking to. In a few sentences, cover the most important things that others need to know about you.

How to write an introduction about yourself

Whether you plan to deliver your self-introduction verbally or in writing, it's helpful to draft a sample of what you want to say in advance. Preparing and practicing a verbal introduction will solidify the key points in your mind so you don't forget any important details. Crafting a written self-introduction will give you a template that you can turn to quickly when you need to send an email regarding a job posting or sales opportunity that you've found.

These steps will help you write an effective self-introduction:

1. Summarize your professional standing

The first sentence of your self-introduction should include your name and job title or experience. If you're unemployed and seeking a job, you might mention your educational degree, certification level or current place in your job search. For example:

"My name is Jordan Lin, and I'm a recent computer science graduate from Stanford University."

"I'm Avery Lucas, and I'm seeking an entry-level warehousing job that will use my organization, attention to detail and time management skills."

"My name is Rylan Curtis, and I'm chief engineer for Jacobs and Associates."

2. Elaborate on your experiences and achievements

Customize this part of the introduction to highlight the details most relevant to the person you're speaking to. If you're in a job interview, discuss your professional skills and accomplishments. If you're giving a presentation, offer information that supports your authority in the area you're speaking on. When you're introducing yourself to a potential client, mention your products and services.

3. Conclude with a lead-in to the next part of the conversation

Keep your introduction short and conclude it by leading into what you'd like to happen next. For a presentation, you would summarize what you plan to discuss. In an interview, mention why you're the best person for the job. A self-introduction to a new client or colleague should end with a call to action. This could be a meeting, sale or further correspondence.

Throughout our lifetime, we introduce ourselves to hundreds of new people everywhere we go. Every time we strike up a conversation with a stranger sitting next to us on the train, duck into a gas station to ask for directions or step up to the checkout counter, we're constantly coming up with new, creative ways to introduce ourselves in line with the circumstances.

And we hardly ever realize we're doing it.

Whether it's a formal meeting or a more laid-back meet up, introductions are sometimes tricky. Especially if you want to make a good first impression either way.

Here are 20 creative ways to show someone who you are within the first precious moments of meeting them (where you use them, of course, is completely up to you).

1. "I'm shy, please come say hi."

Grab a name tag and write, "I'm shy, please come say hi" in the blank space. It's the truth, right?

2. A name is worth a thousand conversations

Do you have a name that's unique, or a name that can be spelled 10 different ways? It's okay to spell it out, tell of its origin or give a short but sweet lesson in pronunciation.

3. Highlight something that makes you unique

"I grew up in New York, but I'm originally from Russia." That's quite an icebreaker! It gives you both something to talk about, something they're at least mildly intrigued by.

4. Start with a pop culture reference

Relate your name back to a character or figure everyone knows. "Hey, my name's Ross. You know, like the guy from FRIENDS."

5. Confess your nickname

If you want to be called something other than your name, follow up with that. They just might respond with, "Oh, I have a cousin who goes by that."

6. Let the way you dress reflect who you are

Dressing style reflects individuality. For example, I know a Chinese girl who deliberately dresses in green to match with her Chinese name "happy to be natural." Everyone can thus instantly remember her. Hence, the way you dress can actually become a topic of conversation and help others remember you.

7. Make a T-shirt

On the front: "On the back of this shirt is everything you need to know about me." The rest is self-explanatory.

8. Make a "business" card

Keep something with you to give away to new people you meet. Instead of your name and contact information, list random facts about yourself, your interests, your hobbies. If nothing else, you'll be the most memorable person in the room for taking something old and boring and giving it new life.

9. Just start talking

It's likely the person you're introducing yourself to feels a little nervous and awkward as well. Dare to dive right into conversation and see where it goes. They might feel relieved you talked first and relax immediately.

10. Keep it relevant

Pay attention to your surroundings. There's likely something happening around you that you can use to strike up a conversation without just walking up to a stranger with your hand outstretched for an unsolicited handshake.

11. Be honest

“I came up to you because I felt awkward just standing here not talking to anyone.” Chances are, they were feeling the same way before you approached them.

12. Search for common ground

Do a little digging while you’re saying hello. Small talk is only awkward until the two of you find something in common. “I’m studying English, I really love reading classics.” You never know, they might too.

13. Always follow up with a question

Let them know you’re interested in getting to know them, too. You don’t want to come off as only wanting to talk about yourself.

14. Consider the situation

Draw from the reason you’re both in a specific place at the same time. Are you students? Working with the same company? Friends of friends? These are great conversation-starters.

15. Put someone else on the spot

Starting off with a compliment or a question allows you to initiate conversation and introduce yourself without being the first one to stand beneath the spotlight. It also shows you’re observant and curious.

16. Pick something in the room to “guard”

“Don’t mind me, I’m just guarding the mozzarella sticks. You can have one if you want.”

17. The mutual friend is the key

“I’ve known Jeremy since college, we took a lot of classes together.” This at least gives you an outlet to talk about yourself relative to someone else the other person knows from somewhere else.

It makes you seem more familiar to them, and vice versa.0

18. Engage with your surroundings

Even if it’s only paying attention to something on T.V., what you’re doing can give someone a decent introduction to who you are and what interests you.

19. Help someone out

There’s more than one reason why keeping your phone in your pocket is a good idea. Someone approaching might need help opening a door or carrying something, and by assisting, you’re automatically introducing yourself as a Good Samaritan, instead of just another person playing Candy Crush.

20. Smile

Your face, particularly your eyes and your expression, is the first thing someone sees when they notice you for the first time. Give off an aura of happiness even if you’re uncomfortable. It draws people in.

Introducing people is both an art and a means of ensuring good manners. A good introduction can get people off to a great conversational start and can help ease any discomfort or unease at meeting for the first time. When you introduce people, the most important, and trickiest, part can be to figure out who should be introduced to whom, based on rank and authority. Once you have that figured out, you can easily help two people get to know each other — and even to start a great conversation in the process

Listening

When you listen to someone, put the **focus** on them. Don’t get stuck in your own thoughts or play with your phone or fall into other distractions. Give them the attention you’d want if they were listening to you. While they speak, let them know they have your attention. Make eye contact, nod as they speak, and give verbal interjections occasionally, such as **yeah** or **OK**.

As the other person shares, **ask relevant questions** to give them further chances to express themselves. Be curious about the other person! For instance, if they're talking about a tough presentation they just gave, ask how they felt when they finished. Think about questions you would like to be asked if you were in the other person's position.

Responding

The first thing you can do is simple: **slow down**. Speaking faster won't gain or hold anyone's attention, as it only makes you more difficult to understand. Remember to breathe as you speak, which will also slow you down and give you time to think. Have faith in your words, and assume you have their attention.

To make your part of the conversation memorable and engaging, keep your words **brief and to the point**. Imagine you're telling a story, and you're cutting all the unnecessary details in order to leave only the powerful parts. While it may be tempting, try to avoid asides into trivial details that add no real value. Repeatedly going off into random tangents is a quick way to lose people's interest.

Take care when having any sort of debate in the workplace. When you agree with someone, feel free to express yourself. But whenever you disagree, keep your response low key and polite. You don't want a lighthearted discussion about movies or company policy turning into something angry and serious. Instead, ask thoughtful questions to better understand their point of view.

Sharing a conversation is all about finding **balance**. You don't want to dominate the conversation, but you don't want to stay quiet the entire time either. Find a healthy rhythm so everyone has the opportunity to share, listen, and contribute.

Making mistakes

Everyone makes **mistakes** during conversations. It's perfectly normal! However, it's how you deal with these mistakes that truly matters. For instance, if you said something inappropriate, it's important to admit your fault, apologize, and make it right. It's best to resolve these types of problems quickly rather than let them linger.

Interruptions ruin the flow of a conversation fast, even if you don't mean to do it. If you interrupt someone, offer a quick "sorry" or "go ahead," and that should be enough to keep the conversation moving. To avoid future interruptions, pay attention to the rhythm of their speech to hear when they're finished discussing a thought.

Many people think **silence** during a conversation is bad, leading them to panic when it happens. However, it can also be useful. Silence is often a natural way to bring up a new subject or include someone new into the conversation. And sometimes it's natural to be silent together, especially if you're comfortable with the other person. And if you want to leave the conversation, silence can be the perfect time to make a friendly farewell. Whatever you do, stay confident and relaxed.

Learning these skills will take plenty of practice, but improving them could change your life in so many ways. Practice one or two tips for a few weeks until they become habits, then practice a few more at the same pace. Soon they'll become second nature, and your conversations will flow with confidence.

How to de-escalate an argument at work

Disagreements happen in the workplace. That's normal. But when a disagreement boils over into an argument, it becomes a problem.

If you find yourself in an argument with a customer or co-worker, your main objective is to **calm the situation** before it escalates. The key strategies for de-escalating an argument involve **breathing**, **listening**, **calm responses**, and **body language**.

Breathe

First, get yourself under control. Take a few **deep breaths**, and you should start to calm down. Staying calm lets you think clearly and keeps your emotions in check. Remember to keep taking deep breaths throughout the de-escalation process.

Listen

Give the other person your **undivided attention**, and truly listen to everything they're saying. Often, people just want their feelings to be heard, and they may calm down simply by expressing themselves to you.

Resist the temptation to respond until they finish speaking their mind. If you talk over them or interrupt them, they may feel like you aren't willing to hear their side. You shouldn't be concerned with winning the disagreement or being right, because your focus should remain on de-escalating the problem.

As you listen, put yourself in their position. Try to understand where their feelings are coming from and why they're upset. Showing **empathy** will provide new insights into the problem, and it could even lead you to the root cause of your disagreement.

Respond

In a calm tone of voice, **acknowledge** their feelings and perspective before moving on to your side of the disagreement. This proves you were paying attention and that you understand how they feel.

As you explain your own perspective, focus on the **facts** of the disagreement. Don't lie, exaggerate, or use insulting language. If the problem involves your feelings, explain how you feel in a professional manner. If you respond with yelling or an emotional outburst, your words might not register with the other person, and the situation will probably get worse.

If you're at fault for something wrong or hurtful, **apologize**. An apology is not a sign of weakness, but rather a gesture of strength, humility, and confidence. A complete apology needs you to do three main things:

- Actually say "**I'm sorry**"
- **Acknowledge** what you did was wrong
- **Explain** how you will not do it again

Finally, we don't recommend telling someone to **calm down**, as you could come off as bossy and dismissive of their feelings. In fact, saying calm down tends to anger people even more.

Body language

As you work through the argument, keep your **body language** in mind. Don't clench your fists, point at the other person, or make sudden movements. The other person could interpret these actions as **aggressive**, and they may react accordingly.

Even standing too close could escalate the problem because it might make them feel cornered or threatened. If the argument is particularly heated, consider giving the other person some extra space, which may ease some of the tension.

It's never easy dealing with conflict at work. But with practice, you can learn how to de-escalate a tense situation into a manageable one.

Instant messaging etiquette

Instant messaging (or IM, for short) is a type of online chat that lets you send and receive brief written messages in real time. Many offices and companies use instant messaging for one-on-one conversations and group discussions. Some of the most popular instant messaging apps include Slack, Google Hangouts, and HipChat.

Watch the video below to learn about instant messaging etiquette.

Getting the feel of instant messaging

At first, instant messaging might seem similar to email, but the tone and feel is a bit different. If email is like sending a digital letter, instant messaging is like having a **digital conversation**. It's quick, informal, and a little more spontaneous.

It will take some time to understand the feel of instant messaging, especially because every workplace uses it differently. Some are more relaxed and playful, using it to share jokes and funny pictures alongside work-related projects. Others are strictly professional, using it only for official business. Until you know for sure what's acceptable, keep your messages business-friendly. If you're ever in doubt whether something you want to say is appropriate, **don't say it!**

Regardless of how your workplace uses instant messaging, your **writing** should remain professional. Keep up the quality of your spelling and grammar so you don't look sloppy. However, much like a face-to-face conversation, your writing doesn't have to be perfect all the time, as long as the other person understands you.

Instant message guidelines

Although instant messaging is designed to be fast, you may have to **wait** sometimes for a reply. If you don't get a response immediately, don't send multiple follow-up messages. This can come off as annoying and pushy. Also, if someone has set their status to Do Not Disturb like in the example below, **respect the status** and don't send them a message unless it's urgent.

For the most part, instant messaging works like an in-person conversation. For instance, if you're asking for something out of the blue, it's polite to **greet** them and **ask** if they are free before making your request.

And if you need to step away during a discussion, tell the other person you're **leaving** first, like in the following example. Otherwise, they'll wonder why you suddenly aren't replying anymore.

Instant messaging does have one quirk when it comes to ending a conversation, however. If everything in the discussion has been resolved, there's usually no need to post a **farewell** message, such as "Nice talking to you, bye!" Often a brief "Thanks" is more than enough.

Once you get the feel of instant messaging, it can be a unique and versatile tool, whether you're asking for updates on a project or sharing goofy dog pictures.

Overcoming phone anxiety

Even in a world filled with emails, texting, and instant messages, your job may require you to pick up the phone and talk. However, the thought of calling strangers might cause some **anxiety**, bringing up questions like:

What if I can't understand the other person?

What if they get upset?

What do I say when I call?

Thankfully, there are solutions that will alleviate these fears and build your confidence.

Watch the video below to learn some tips for overcoming phone anxiety.

Getting started

It's normal to feel nervous if you have to call someone for work, especially if you're calling to share unpleasant news. One key thing to remember before and during your call is to **breathe**. Taking deep breaths clears your mind, gives you time to think, and helps slow down your speech.

If you're nervous about speaking over the phone, consider making some **practice calls** first. Try calling a local store and asking for their operating hours. Simply say "Hi, what are your hours today?" Once they give you an answer, thank them and hang up. That's it! After you make a few of these calls, your confidence should begin to increase.

Making a business call

While the purpose of your call could be anything, the method of making a business call is fairly simple. For instance, here's a clear, reliable procedure for **starting a call**:

. Greet the recipient

. Ask for the person you need

. Introduce yourself

. Explain why you're calling, then get to your point.

With this procedure, your opening should sound like this: "Hello, can I speak with Mr. Clark, please? Hi, Mr. Clark, I'm Jake from Adventure Outfitters, and I'm calling in reference to the order you placed yesterday." As you get more comfortable with making calls, you'll find the rhythm and language that works best for you.

Your **tone of voice** is also important because you want to sound natural and sincere, especially if you're delivering unpleasant news. If you sound irritated or annoyed, the caller may pick up on it, which could make them uncooperative.

Overcoming common fears

Some people are anxious about talking on the phone for a variety of reasons. Here are solutions to some of the more common fears:

- If you **can't understand** someone, ask them "Sorry, could you say that again?" This is a common request with phone calls and is nothing out of the ordinary.
- If you're worried about **forgetting important things** you need to say, write down any key information you may need and refer to it during your call.
- When putting a caller **on hold**, say something like "I'm going to put you on hold while I look into your question.
- Is that OK?" If you let the other person know what's going on, they'll be more likely to remain patient while on hold.
- If a caller keeps going **off topic or interrupting** you, consider saying something like "Sorry, I have to pause you for one second." Then say whatever you need to say. Without body language to help you, you'll occasionally need methods like this to keep the conversation on track.
- If someone is **upset or uncooperative**, keep calm and **de-escalate** the situation. You always want to remain professional and reasonable, no matter what the other person says.

Speaking on the phone can feel intimidating at first, but as you practice, this fear will fade away as your confidence builds.

Business writing essentials

At some point in your professional life, you may need to write something. It's nothing to be intimidated by, though!

Business writing is any written communication used in a professional setting, including **emails**, **memos**, and **reports**. It's direct, clear, and designed to be read quickly. With time and practice, you too can become an effective business writer.

Watch the video below to learn some tips for business writing.

The basics of business writing

Good business writing shares crucial information and keeps the concerns of the audience in mind. So before you write anything, ask yourself these two questions:

What do I need to say?

Who is my audience?

Your answers will influence what and how you write, so take a moment to understand exactly why you're writing. If you can't clearly answer these questions, you'll probably have trouble communicating effectively.

Most business writing needs a **call to action**, which is information that instructs and encourages a response. Let your readers know what they should do, where to go, and so on. Provide your contact information (such as your phone number or email address) in case anyone has questions. Essentially, make sure everyone knows what their next move should be, like in the following example.

Writing craft

Get to the point quickly. Do you need to tell your employees about a change in work schedules or an update to company policy? Tell them what they should know upfront, and don't leave them guessing.

Make every sentence as short and clear as possible. Simplify your word choices, as you shouldn't use complex words when simple ones will do. Also, cut any rambling thoughts. A company-wide memo about a health insurance change is not the best place to mention your recent fishing trip. In short, always **omit needless words**.

Although you're in a professional setting, remember to speak to others how you would like to be spoken to. Consider using a brief greeting or conclusion, especially if you're sharing unpleasant news, and remember that saying **please** and **thank you** goes a long way. And whenever you're in doubt as to whether something is appropriate to write, don't include it.

Aim to keep your paragraphs brief, as they will add focus to your message while making it easier to scan and remember. The example below is an efficient read, thanks to short paragraphs, clear sentences, and a polite, professional tone.

Revision

Good writing comes out of **revision**, so read over your first draft and figure out what works and what doesn't. Clarify sentences and organize the loose structure until everything flows in a logical order. Don't be surprised if it takes a few revisions until your document is ready to go.

As part of your revision process, try reading your work aloud, which may reveal problems you may not have noticed before. You can also get someone you trust to provide **feedback** on your work. Hearing their perspective can lead to new insights and issues you never knew were there.

Proofreading is another key part of revision. After you use a spell checker, read over your work again and look for spelling and grammar errors the spell checker may have missed. Also take a moment to ensure the information you're writing about is accurate and up to date. If you submit incorrect information or sloppy writing, you may not be taken seriously. Does the following example look professional?

Remember, you won't master business writing overnight. Effective writing is a skill that takes a lot of time and practice to develop. But once you get comfortable with it, you'll possess an incredibly valuable job skill.

How to write a formal business letter

Whenever you need to communicate with another company or share important news, **business letters** can present your message in a classic, polished style. Unlike internal memos, business letters are usually written from one company to another, which is why they're so **formal and structured**. However, letters are also quite versatile, as they can be used for official requests, announcements, cover letters, and much more.

Despite the formality, letters can still have a **friendly tone**, especially because they include brief introductions before getting to the main point. Regardless of the tone you use in your letter, your writing should remain concise, clear, and easy to read.
Watch the video below to learn about formal business letters.
This lesson focuses on American business letters. Letters written in other parts of the world may have minor differences in formatting.

The structure of a business letter

The business letter's precise **structure** is crucial to its look and readability. As you write your letter, you can follow the structure below to create an effective document.

- **Opening**: Include your mailing address, the full date (for example, July 30, 2017), and the recipient's name, company, and address. Skip one line between your address, the date, and your recipient's information. Don't add your address if you're using letterhead that already contains it.
- **Salutation**: Address the recipient using "Dear," along with their title and last name, such as "Dear Mr. Collins" or "Dear Director Kinkade." If you don't know the recipient's gender, use their full name, such as "Dear Taylor Dean." Finally, be sure to add a colon to the end of the salutation.
- **Body**: In the first paragraph, introduce yourself and the main point of your letter. Following paragraphs should go into the details of your main point, while your final paragraph should restate the letter's purpose and provide a call to action, if necessary.
- **Closing**: Recommended formal closings include "Sincerely" or "Yours truly." For a more personal closing, consider using "Cordially" or "Best regards." Regardless of what you choose, add a comma to the end of it.
- **Signature**: Skip four lines after the closing and type your name. Skip another line and type your job title and company name. If you're submitting a hard copy, sign your name in the empty space using blue or black ink.
- **Enclosures**: If you're including documents with this letter, list them here.

Another important part of the structure is the layout, which determines how the text is formatted. The most common layout for a business letter is known as **block format**, which keeps all text left-justified and single spaced, except for double spaces between the paragraphs. This layout keeps the letter looking clean and easy to read.

Revision

As stated in **Business Writing Essentials**, **revision** is a crucial part of writing. Review your letter to keep it concise, and proofread it for spelling and grammar errors. Once you're finished writing, ask someone to read your letter and give you **feedback**, as they can spot errors you may have missed. Also make sure any enclosures are attached to your document and that any hard copies are signed.
After revising the content, consider the **appearance** of your letter. If you're printing a hard copy, be sure to use quality paper. Also try using letterhead to give your document a more official look.

Example of a business letter

To see this lesson in action, let's take a look at a polished business letter by reviewing the example below.
This letter looks great! The structure is perfect, and the text is left-justified and single spaced. The body is formal, friendly, and concise, while the salutation and closing look good. It also contains a handwritten signature, which means it's ready to be submitted as a hard copy.

Knowing how to write a business letter will serve you well throughout your career. Keep practicing and studying it, and you'll be able to communicate in a classic style.

How to write a powerful business report

When a company needs to make an informed decision, it can create a **business report** to guide its leaders.

Business reports use facts and research to study data, analyze performance, and provide recommendations on a company's future.

Watch the video below to learn how to write and format a business report.

The basics of a business report

Business reports are always **formal**, **objective**, and **heavily researched**. Every fact must be clear and verifiable, regardless of whether the report focuses on a single situation or examines the overall performance of an entire company.

Because **objectivity** is crucial in a business report, avoid subjective descriptions that tell the reader how to feel. For instance, if sales were down last quarter, don't say "Sales were terrible last quarter," but rather let the sales data speak for itself. There should also be no personal pronouns, such as "I think we should invest more capital." A business report should remain impersonal and framed from the company's perspective.

The structure of a business report

Although the size of a report can range from one page to 100, **structure** is always important because it allows readers to navigate the document easily. While this structure can vary due to report length or company standards, we've listed a common, reliable structure below:

- **Front matter**: List your name, job title, contact information, and the date of submission. You can also create a title for the report.
- **Background**: State the background of the topic you'll be addressing, along with the purpose of the report itself.
- **Key findings**: Provide **facts**, **data**, and **key findings** that are relevant to the purpose stated in the background. Be clear and specific, especially because the entire report depends on the information in this section.
- **Conclusion**: Summarize and interpret the key findings, identify issues found within the data, and answer questions raised by the purpose.
- **Recommendations**: Recommend **solutions** to any problems mentioned in the conclusion, and summarize how these solutions would work. Although you're providing your own opinion in this section, avoid using personal pronouns and keep everything framed through the company's perspective.
- **References**: List the **sources** for all the data you've cited throughout the report. This allows people to see where you got your information and investigate these same sources.

Some companies may also require an **executive summary** after the front matter section, which is a complete summary that includes the report's background, key findings, and recommendations. This section lets people learn the highlights quickly without having to read the entire document. The size of an executive summary can range from a paragraph to multiple pages, depending on the length of the report.

Revision

As mentioned in **Business Writing Essentials**, revision is key to producing an effective document. Review your writing to keep it focused and free of proofreading errors, and ensure your factual information is correct and presented objectively. We also recommend you get **feedback** from a colleague before submitting your work because they can spot errors you missed or find new opportunities for analysis or discussion.

Once you've revised your content, think about the report's **appearance**. Consider turning your front matter section into a cover page to add some visual polish. You can also create a table of contents if the report is lengthy. If you're printing it out, use quality paper and a folder or binder to hold the report together. To diversify the presentation of your data, try using bulleted lists, graphics, and charts.

Example of a business report

To demonstrate the principles of this lesson, we've created a brief business report for you to review.

The layout of the front matter is simple and effective, while the background sets the stage in a quick, specific manner. The key findings provide the main takeaways that warrant further investigation, along with a chart to add emphasis and visual variety.

The conclusion features little of the writer's opinion on the key findings, although the writing is still centered around the company's perspective. The recommendations are clear and supported by the data, while the references are thorough.

While business reports may seem intimidating, you have the ability to create a thorough, informative document through practice and careful research. Collect the facts and present them in an organized, objective manner, and you'll help your business make informed decisions.

How to write an effective business email

Since the professional world embraced the Internet, email has been a cornerstone of business communication. Over the years, **business emails** have developed a style and structure that you can use to create more effective messages.

Watch the video below to learn the basics of writing a business email.

The basics of a business email

All business emails should be direct, clear, and easy to read. The **tone** of a business email, however, can vary from informal to formal. The formality can depend on your company, the intended audience, subject matter, and several other factors. If you're unsure how formal your email should be, review our lesson on **how formal an email should be**.

Regardless of the formality, remember to **stay professional** because you lose control of the email once you click Send. Emails can be copied and forwarded to others indefinitely, and if you're inappropriate or unprofessional, your poor choice of words could follow you.

Writing a business email

As with any email, a business email should include a brief but descriptive **subject line**, one or more **recipients**, and an **attachment** if needed. If you are including multiple recipients, consider using the **CC** (carbon copy) field to keep the extra recipients in the loop without requiring them to respond. To learn more about the basic parts of an email, take a look at our lesson on **common email features**.

When you start writing the main content of the email, there's a simple and effective structure you can follow:

- **Greeting:** Make it **brief and friendly**, and address the recipient by name if you know it. For instance, "Hi Jonathan" or "Greetings Ms. Childress" are both reliable introductions. The first name is preferable if you're more familiar with the recipient, while you should use their last name if you want to be more formal.
- **Body:** Start with your **main point** so no one has to hunt for it, and keep your writing concise and focused on the concerns of your audience. If you need a response

from the recipient, make sure to include a **call to action** so they know how and why to respond. Also, if you've **attached a file**, be sure to mention it here.

- **Ending**: Offer a **quick farewell**, such as “Thanks” or “Sincerely”, then give your name and contact information in case they have questions.

Revision

Although email is meant to be quick, always **take time to revise** your writing before you click Send. Review your spelling and grammar, and confirm the accuracy of any facts you present.

If you read the email aloud, you may find additional errors or realize that your words are missing a professional tone.

Make sure any attachments you mention are actually attached, and confirm that any included web links are correct. Broken links, missing attachments, and incorrect information only slow things down and force you to send correction emails.

Examples of business emails

To demonstrate the principles of this lesson, let's look at two examples of business emails. First, let's start with a poor example.

The example above is looking rough. The subject line is vague, the body is full of spelling errors and rambling thoughts, and the main point is difficult to find. Plus, the overall tone is unprofessional.

Writing concise emails is a key skill in the professional world, which you can develop through consistent practice. Keep writing and learning, and you'll become a more effective communicator with each email you create.

How to write a clear business memo

When you need to update your colleagues on important information or make an announcement at your workplace, a **business memo** can be an ideal way to address a specific audience in a formal context.

The basics of a business memo

While business memos and **emails** may look similar at first, a memo has some key differences. Memos are usually more formal than emails and are often used when you need to give your message a more official look. They can also be printed and distributed wherever this message would have the most impact.

Memos can be addressed to a single person or a group, so **tailor your message** to reflect the concerns of your audience.

As with any business document, always remain professional and polite, even if you have to address a negative topic. An official memo is no place to single someone out in a critical way, so focus on facts and constructive plans for the future.

Writing a business memo

Business memos usually begin with a **header section** that lists recipients and other details in the following format:

- **To**: Include each recipient’s name and job title (for example, Miranda Lawson, Director of Marketing). If you're addressing a designated group, however, simply state the name of the group (for example, Accounting Department).
- **From**: Include your name and title.
- **Date**: Write out the complete date (for example, June 30, 2017).
- **Subject**: Make the subject brief and descriptive.

Most business memos skip the greeting (such as “Greetings, Ms. Lawson”) and immediately go into the body text. Whenever you start a paragraph in a memo, always put the main point of that paragraph first, as this makes your writing direct and easy to follow.

Generally, memos don't include a farewell (such as "Sincerely, Tonya"), but it may be appropriate depending on your message or your company's style. If you do include a farewell, make it brief.

Revision

As discussed in the **Business Writing Essentials** lesson, revision is vital for any quality document. Read over your writing to **cut** unnecessary material, **clarify** your main points, and **proofread** for grammar and factual errors. And before you submit your memo to your audience, consider getting **feedback** from a colleague to ensure your message is effective and professional.

Examples of business memos

Let's explore a few business memos to see this lesson in action. We'll start with an example of a poorly written memo.

The example above is not acceptable. The body is unclear and rambling, there's no subject line, and the main point of each paragraph is difficult to find. The message itself is also incredibly unprofessional, especially because it calls out a single person in a negative way.

Whether you're detailing a new policy change or updating staff on a new procedure, business memos are a powerful way to distribute information among your colleagues. As you practice and study, your memos will become more efficient and polished.

Choosing fonts for business documents

In order for your content to be the focus of your document, your text needs to be professional and easy to read. This is why choosing the right font is such a crucial part of business writing.

Fonts are a key part of **typography**, which is the art of arranging text in a legible and appealing way. It's helpful to know some background on typography, so watch the video below to learn more.

As you can see in the video, typography offers a lot of creative possibilities. However, the business world usually prefers more professional fonts. Throughout this lesson, we'll focus on fonts commonly used in business documents.

Your company may use its own style to format its documents, such as using a particular font or color scheme. If so, your company's style should always take priority over the tips in this lesson.

Serif and sans serif

Choosing the right font depends on how you want your document to look. Do you want it to look classic and traditional, or do you need something more modern? No matter what you're searching for, it can be found within one of the two font types: **serif** and **sans serif.**

Serif fonts have small strokes attached to the main part of the letter, which gives the font a more traditional look. Recommended serif fonts include Cambria, Georgia, and Times New Roman.

Sans serif fonts don't have small strokes attached to their letters, giving them a cleaner and more modern style. Some recommended sans serif fonts include Arial, Calibri, and Verdana.

Many typography experts **believe** serif fonts are more legible in print and sans serif fonts are easier to read on computer screens. However, **others believe** that either font type can be legible no matter where you use it. Ultimately, you should choose the font that best fits your message and desired look.

Font size

An effective font size is big enough to easily read but doesn't take up too much space. This means your body text should be a **10-point to a 12-point font**, depending on the look you want and your company's preferred style. If you can't decide between sizes, a 12-point font is usually the reliable choice because it's incredibly common in the business world.

Headings, on the other hand, can be larger than a 12-point font if you need to add emphasis. Increasing the heading size to a 14-point or 16-point font is usually more than enough to make your heading stand out.

Keeping it simple

As we discussed in our lesson on **how to format a business document**, your writing is most effective when the formatting is **simple**. One way to keep it simple is to only use one or two fonts per document. This will help make it look more cohesive and professional.

A font should also never take the focus away from your content, so avoid fonts that are goofy or decorative. If a font is distracting or undermines your message in any way, it needs to be changed.

Let's take a look at an example of a document with unprofessional fonts.

Decorative fonts have weakened the example above. The primary font simply isn't appropriate for a business document. Also, the example contains several unprofessional fonts, which are distracting and inconsistent with the serious tone of the message.

Now let's look at a more polished example.

This example is a big improvement! By using a professional font throughout the memo, the author's content is clear and free of distraction.

The font you use can make or break your business writing. Choose a font that best fits the purpose and style of your message, and you'll have a document that's professional and easy to read.

3.5 CONVERSATION SKILL

Making conversation at the office can be awkward. Stay all business and you risk coming across as a buttoned-up, stuffy person who doesn’t know how to cut loose. Too nice? You might find yourself taken for granted or even passed over for promotions. And if your conversations are too casual, you may find that you’re not taken seriously. How do you strike the perfect balance when making workday chat?

When it comes to office chatter, there are a few simple best practices you should observe.

Your writing, at its best

Be the best writer in the office.

1 Show interest in others.

We naturally like people who are interested in us. Open conversations with a question, and then genuinely pay attention to the answer. A simple “How’s your day going?” goes a long way.

2 Respect your office culture.

Casual banter and humor may not fly in a formal setting. Ditto for an overly serious attitude at a workplace that embraces a more casual tone. The office is one place where you want to fit in.

3 Keep your opinions about life outside the office to yourself.

It’s cool if you let your co-workers know that you love your dog, or that you like to skydive on the weekends, but leave more charged topics like religion and politics alone.

4 Stay positive.

Yes, bad things happen at work, but that doesn't mean you have to have a negative mindset. Keep your tone positive by focusing on solutions instead of grumbling about problems.

5 Don't gossip.

Office gossip will almost always come back to haunt you. When someone shares private information with you, be sure to keep their confidence. And whatever you do, don't badmouth management or your colleagues.

6 Listen and observe.

Make it a rule to listen more often than you talk. The more insight you gain into your colleagues and the general vibe of your office environment, the more relevant and meaningful things you'll have to say when it's your turn to speak.

Chatting with Senior Colleagues

Conversing with office mates who share the same rung of the corporate ladder is one thing, but the dynamic changes when you're talking to someone higher up. All of the tips we just provided are still in play (you weren't really going to talk politics with your manager, were you?), but there are a few more you should observe to keep things professional.

7 To be interesting, be interested. Within reason.

Dale Carnegie was right—the secret to being liked is to show an interest in others. But mind that you keep the topics professional. "How was your fishing trip?" is a great question. "Were you as drunk as you looked at the club this weekend?"…not so much.

8 Make conversation at the appropriate times.

Chat with your senior colleagues when you know they're not in a hurry, like when you're both heading to grab a cup of coffee. Match the topic to the length of time at hand. Asking something like "How did you get into this field of work?" might be an appropriate conversation-starter at an office dinner function, but it's not well-suited for a two-minute break at the water cooler.

9 Schedule time to discuss work-related topics.

Have an idea for improving the quality of your social media analytics? Don't present that during a thirty-second elevator ride. Instead, consider using email or other office channels to schedule a meeting. Otherwise, your ideas may get lost in the shuffle or, worse, you'll come across as a pest.

10 Don't kiss up.

No one likes the colleague who's doing everything short of jumping up and down, shouting "Look at me! Look at me!" to stay on the boss's radar.

Communicating with Your Employees

Once more, the rules change a bit when you're making conversation with someone you directly manage. Now you're in a position where you need to command respect, and that applies even in casual settings. Here's how.

11 Have a sense of humor.

If it comes naturally, use humor to make yourself more approachable. Just keep it office-appropriate. Remember, you're setting the tone for everyone else.

12 Bring others into your conversations.

Even the most casual banter with a senior colleague can feel intimidating when it's one-on-one. Consider inviting others into the mix to ease the tension and help everyone feel comfortable.

13 Don't get too personal.

Keep your chatty questions neutral. It's fine to ask whether your employee had a nice time on vacation, but when you ask about their relationships with their significant others, you're straying into personal territory. Would you feel comfortable answering if your employee asked you the same question?

14 Sincere compliments are always welcome.

It's helpful to praise individual performance-related wins that you might only mention cumulatively on a performance review. ("Good job on the presentation this morning! Your Powerpoint chops are becoming legendary.") They can provide confidence boosts that increase morale.

Whatever your hierarchy in the office jungle, making conversation is a matter of applying a combination of empathy (chat like you'd like to be chatted to!), good observation skills, and a little common sense.

3.6 EXIT STRATEGIES

You've done it! You're in a conversation at a networking event. You feel like it's going well and you've enjoyed chatting with them. **The whole time you've been a little nervous because you never know how to wrap up conversations and often feel like you get stuck in them. [click to tweet]** Going to networking events can have its challenges. For some getting into a conversation is difficult, for many wrapping up a conversation gracefully is the real challenge.

How do you know when to move on?

Mindfulness

Are you feeling distracted and unable to focus on what your conversation partner is talking about? Are you having difficulty maintaining eye contact with the person speaking and keep looking over their shoulder at that person who looks like, no definitely is, your ex (or boss, person you want to date or work for, best friend from 3rd grade, etc.). Notice this is happening. Become aware of yourself in the room, this will help you know when it's time to wrap up the conversation.

Bored or boring?

Self-awareness will help you realize that you are tired (or hungry, worried about the meter running out on your parking space, etc.). None of these distractions have anything to do with whether the person you're speaking with is boring. These are about you and what's going on in your body and mind. If you need to use the restroom and the person you're speaking with is telling an exciting story, you won't register the same enthusiasm you usually would. You would appear distracted. If you kept checking your phone to see if the babysitter has texted her check-in. You would appear bored. Again, this has nothing to do with the person you are speaking with. These are signs that you should wrap things up so you can deal with whatever is distracting you. If you notice these signs in the person you're speaking with – it doesn't necessarily mean you're boring, but it does mean you should wrap things up.

Internal clock

What if you really hit it off with someone and you're having an amazing conversation? Wonderful! That's excellent. Even so, you'll want to have a sense of how much time is passing. Your goal (and likely theirs) was to meet or reconnect with several people at the event, so squirreling away with one person for most of the night isn't advantageous for either of you. Tell them you've really enjoyed the conversation and would love to stay in touch. Invite them to attend an upcoming event you have on your calendar or ask where else you might run into each other.

End on a high note

The key here is to leave them wanting more. Whether you're having a really great conversation or after a few questions realized it wasn't going anywhere – you want to leave them feeling good about you. Then when you see them later in the evening, they will naturally be inclined to introduce you to the people they are standing with.

Ask to be introduced

If you're new to a space, a great way to wrap up a conversation is to ask to be introduced, "Do you know anyone here you think I should meet? Great. Will you introduce me?" This works best if you're speaking to someone who's a regular at these events, but it could work if they even know only one other person in the room. This allows them to be a connector. They've learned a little bit about you and can use that information to try and make a great match. Results will vary, but this method will help you get closer to making the best connections possible in that room.

Numbers game

One other thing to keep in mind when you're trying to decide if it's time to move on – how many people are you speaking with? If there are three or more people in your group you can slide away when others are talking with a gesture and a murmur. You don't need to look each person in the eye, shake their hand, and tell them you're walking away. You just say, "I'm going to go mmmm…" trailing off as you walk away. Easy as that. Take notice though of when there are only three of you, because if someone other than you walks away there will only be two of you. At that point you need to decide whether it's time to wrap up the conversation by asking to be introduced (or offering to introduce them). You may also want to invite someone else to join you, which would then allow you to step away once they became engaged in conversation.

Grip, grin, and go.

What if it's just the two of you and you're ready to move on? What do you do and say to exit gracefully? **It's a three-step process that needs to be done without interruption. [click to tweet]** Start by shaking their hand (grip), then with a smile (grin) say something nice (e.g. "It was great to see you here." "I enjoyed meeting you." "Pleasure speaking with you."), and then walk away (go). If you've had trouble ending a conversation, it's possible you interrupted this three-step process. Have you ever shook someone's hand, said it was great to meet them, and then thought of something else you wanted to say to them?

If you say it at that moment and you chat for a few more minutes, you've wasted the social cue of handshaking. It's quite possible that when you once again shake hands, the person you are speaking with will interrupt with a comment or question. Yes, you're now stuck a bit, but who started it? You have some control over how successful the social cue of a handshake is. Your hands and feet need to be in sync. If you shake hands, your feet need to walk away. You can always circle back to chat with that person again later in the evening or send a follow-up email.

Remember, the goal is to leave them on a high note so they are looking forward to seeing or hearing from you again. That is the basis of relationship-building, which after all is the point of networking.

It may seem like a process no one really undergoes, but an exit strategy is quite effective when it comes to leaving on a positive note. In the business community, professional networking is everything. You need a strong network in case you need new opportunities for employment or future business decisions. Sound exit strategies—as an employee or business owner—help you maintain relationships even after the termination of contracts.

For instance, an employee exit plan will constitute an exit interview where they get a chance to discuss their employment journey with the organization.

When used ethically and efficiently, exit strategies aid in lessening the impact of failure and also help you achieve your objectives. They're similar to a peace treaty where both parties leave on a positive note—not unlike a win-win negotiation.

Here are some characteristics of a successful exit strategy:

It's A Conversation Where Both Parties Can Put Their Expectations On The Table To Achieve Their Goals

It's A Carefully Thought-Out Plan To Mitigate Failure And Maintain Healthy Professional Networks

It Gives Way To A Dialogue That May Even Help You Figure Out Why There's A Need For An Exit Strategy

It Can Help You Address Grievances And Give Feedback To Your Employer

It's Also A Way To Negotiate Your Way To Better Compensation In Case Your Employer Feels The Need To Keep You On Board

Exit strategies don't have to be uncomfortable or negative. If you plan in advance and appeal to the other party with concrete examples, solutions and experiences, you stand a much better chance of gaining something productive.

What Are Some Exit Strategies For Employees?

An employee exit plan is far different than say mergers with another organization or selling your business. If you're an employee, and considering leaving your current organization, you're probably already searching for new jobs. This means you need references or a robust professional network to fall back on. Unless things went downhill because of a toxic work environment or problems with management, it's ideal to leave on a good note.

Whether it's scheduling an exit interview with your employer or discussing why you're leaving with your immediate supervisor, try to reach out to someone to get your point across. Leaving cold turkey is rare. You want a job, you need to pay the bills. So, why ruin your relationship with your current organization?

Here are some manageable steps for an employee's exit strategy:

Discuss The Reasons For An Exit Strategy

Getting into a discussion with your HR may be something you want to avoid—especially if you're right at the end of your employment journey with that organization.

But a proper interview can give you a chance to bring to light what you enjoyed about your time in your organization, what can be improved and what you've done for them. Being employed is a mutually beneficial relationship where both the employee and employer have something to gain. Try to think of specific instances that highlight these aspects.

Communicate As Clearly As Possible

Maybe your experience in your organization left a bitter taste. If you're parting ways because of a toxic organizational culture or you had a falling out with someone, you can communicate this as part of your exit strategies. You may be afraid of backlash or things backfiring, but honesty is the best policy. Rather than twisting the narrative or sugar-coating things, if the situation calls for it, you should try to tell them exactly what went wrong. Not only will this help you come to terms with what happened but also help future employees enjoy a better work culture.

Suggest Alternatives If Possible

Say you're quitting your job for reasons such as workload, skewed work-life balance or different work styles. You can take this opportunity to suggest ways that you can still be involved with the organization, whether you want to work as a consultant, freelancer or part-time. If your organization is willing, everyone wins.

Offer To Train Your Replacement

Most times when you leave, there will be someone new who'll take your place. A responsible thing to do is offer to either create a 'how-to' guide for that person or train them to get comfortable with their job role. Transfer of duty is important to make sure the organization's operations don't take a hit.

Be Sure To Leave On A Positive Note

At the end of the day, work is a critical part of your life, but it doesn't dominate your existence. If you want to leave on a positive note, you must. For any future endeavors, it's important to get sound references and recommendations from previous employers. Even universities prefer to run checks on our employment and academic history.

Exit strategies that end with healthy, long-term relationships are highly successful. Longevity trumps the satisfaction you may receive in the short term.

Exit strategies for employees should be about focusing on solutions. Taking a solution-oriented approach will help you see things clearly. You may want to continue your relationship with your organization in a different capacity. Maybe you found better opportunities or you want to change fields altogether. Whatever the reason, you can definitely terminate your employment and still maintain a professional relationship.

What Are Some Types Of Exit Strategies?

Turn problems into solutions. An exit strategy is your chance to turn a situation in your favor. You don't have to take it in a bad light. This is an opportunity for you to either make a profit, build meaningful relationships and enter into a new, more fruitful contract than the one you are leaving.

Here are a few different types of exit strategies you may encounter in your professional life:

Selling Your Business

It may not be as common, but yes, many entrepreneurs do end up selling their business, whether in part or wholly, to others. If your business is suffering repeated losses and you're finding it hard to keep afloat, a buy-out offer can actually save you a lot of time, energy and resources. Just make sure to do your research and sell to someone who can be trusted.

Leaving Long-Term Clients

Freelancers—whether writers, designers or consultants—often enter into short and long-term contracts with different types of clients. As a freelancer, you may wish to exit a contract if you don't like the terms or if you want to move on to better, more lucrative opportunities. In such a situation, you can tread with care and leave on an ethical note. Appreciate your relationship, what you've gained from it and always leave the door open. You may need to go back to them one day.

Changing Jobs

If you're thinking of changing jobs because you found something that pays a higher salary or maybe a better work-life balance, you can think of ways to best break the news to your supervisors. It can be tricky if you're deeply involved in business operations but you should always seek better opportunities to grow as a professional. An exit interview is the best way to level the playfield. Talk about what you enjoyed and learned in your role, how you grew into a professional and how you were able to build essential skills. These do leave a positive and lasting impression on your employer.

These are by no means exhaustive examples when it comes to exit strategies. But these are some of the most commonly observed ones. If you or someone you know has or will encounter an exit strategy, you can use some of these tips to achieve your goal

Turning Problems Into Solutions

Learn more about how you can turn problems into solutions with Harappa's Creating Solutions course. Our problem-solving course has been designed for individuals who want to be analytical when it comes to finding solutions. If you want to build a sound exit strategy, you can do so by considering different perspectives, directions and options. With careful, objective thinking you can create solutions that work for both parties involved.

One of the most important frameworks is the **Multiple Whys**—a technique to get to the root cause of the problems by asking relevant 'why' questions in succession. The more you probe, the better the solutions. Enroll today and learn how not to take things at face value and consider other ways to solve complex problems

3.7 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. State the importance of Business planning
2. What are the limitations of Business planning
3. Discuss the process of planning
4. Describe some of the formal greeting methods
5. How to DE-escelate an argument at work?

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What are the informal methods of greeting someone?
2. How to overcome phone anxiety?
3. Mention few business writing essentials
4. Which are the exit strategies used by the employees?
5. Discuss some types of exit strategies

Multiple choice question

1. Which of the following can be referred to planning?

A. Departmentation

B. Government policy

C. Forecasting

D. All of the above

2. Without the right _______ in the room, you can never meet your meetings' goals.

A. **People**

B. Furniture

C. Atmosphere

D. Air conditioner

3. __________ are salutations people say to others when meeting them.
A. Goodbye
B. **Greetings**
C. Hello
D. Whatsapp
4. When someone shares private information with you, be sure to keep their _________.
A. Confidence
B. Agreement
C. Fear
D. Cheating
5. The whole time you've been a little nervous because you never know how to ______ up conversations and often feel like you get stuck in them.
A. Wrap
B. End
C. Finish
D. All of above

3.8 REFERENCE

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UNIT 4- DINING FOR PROFIT: FROM UTENSILS TO SALAD

STRUCTURE

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this Students will be able to

- Define the concept of place navigation
- Understand the significance of management
- Learning methods/styles of eating
- Explain significance of thank you note.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Proper etiquette is essential for making a favorable impression at both lunch/dinner interviews as well as in social business situations. Although common sense is often your best guide, the following suggestions will help you stand out as a polished professional.

Reception/Social Hour

Reception or social hours are typically for the purpose of networking for jobs and entertaining clients. Follow the lead of the majority of individuals in the room and the following basic tips:

- **Keep at least one hand free.** If you are standing, have only a drink or food in one hand, never both. Hold a drink in your left hand so that you have a dry hand to offer a firm, not crushing, hand shake.
- You can eat and drink while sitting, but it is **always better to stand and greet.**
- **Make good eye contact.** Don’t forget to introduce yourself to the host/hostess and don’t interrupt conversations.
- **Avoid approaching two people engaged in deep conversation.** Wait until there is a break so you can introduce yourself. Look for visual cues to join the conversation.
- **Make eye contact.** Ask people questions about themselves and the work they do.
- **Always offer your contact information and know when it is time to go.** Move on to the next group or individual, follow up with promising contacts, and assess how you can improve your performance.

Dining Etiquette

ARRIVAL/SITTING DOWN

- Arrive on time and call ahead if you know you will be late.
- Do not place any bags, purses, sunglasses, cell phones, or briefcases on the table.

- Have proper posture and keep elbows off the table.
- Wait 15 minutes before calling to check on the arrival status of your dinner partners.

TABLE SETTING

- When presented with a variety of eating utensils, remember the guideline to “start at the outside and work your way in”. For example, if you have two forks, begin with the fork on the outside.
- Do not talk with your utensils and never hold a utensil in a fist.
- Set the utensils on your plate, not the table, when you are not using them.

4.2 NAVIGATING PLACE

As a small business owner, I'm constantly driving to meetings to grow my digital marketing agency (and if it weren't for my GPS, I'm not sure my company would still be in business). In today's digital age, however, face-to-face interaction is becoming a lost art. Yet there are so many ideas that are formulated in a meeting that can't be replicated through email, over the phone or even via video conference.

Several tips for making the most of every meeting, including the best steps to take before and after:

1. Send an email confirming the address beforehand.

Never assume the meeting location's address is correct online or even on Google Maps. If the webmaster for the company you are meeting with hasn't updated their Google My Business page, you could be traveling to an old location. And unfortunately, the blame will still be on you and your company if you're not on time.

2. Scout out a nearby coffee shop.

Having the right mindset heading into a meeting is crucial. Arriving with plenty of time beforehand will put you in the right state of mind: There's nothing more stressful than sitting in traffic when you are on the verge of being late. Pick out a coffee shop you're comfortable with and head there before your meeting. This will also give you plenty of time to prep for your meeting.

3. Ask for a list of attendees.

I can't tell you how many times I thought I was only meeting with John Doe, and three other people showed up to the meeting. If you are handing out a PowerPoint deck, this can be troublesome.

Make sure you ask for a list of everyone who will be attending and get their contact information. Sometimes, the most important decision maker won't be the one you are initially communicating with.

4. Do your research.

If you go into a meeting somewhat prepared, you've already lost the battle. Not only do you need to be an expert in your own field, but you need to be an expert in the other person's field, too. Plan to have a list of questions prepared. You'll be amazed how impressed a prospective client will be if they know you've done your due diligence before the meeting. While most do their research, many don't go the extra mile.

5. Dress to impress.

Your outfit doesn't need to be fancy or expensive, but you should always be sure to look professional. You never want to go into a business meeting underdressed. I am always under the impression that if I'm asking a business for money to sign up for my agency's services, I should wear a nice jacket. Investing a couple of hundred dollars into your "meeting wardrobe" can go a long way. Remember, you will never get a second chance to make a first impression.

6. Leave them with something memorable.

Let's say you have a meeting regarding new business and it's a productive session. Afterward, you and your prospect go on to attend other meetings like it's any other day. You want to leave your prospect with something memorable.

We hand out branded coffee mugs after all meetings: Yes, there is a cost involved, but our thought is that the person we are meeting with is important to us since they've put us on their calendar. It's also a great idea to send out a thank-you note to everyone who attended your meeting.

7. Head back to your coffee shop.

This is a trick that works wonders: Since you've already done your research on a nearby coffee shop and are comfortable in that setting, make sure you head back to this destination to jot down all of your notes.

Too often, business owners will attend a meeting, get back on the road, and by the time they get home, they've already started thinking about the meetings they have the next day. Key details can get lost if you don't jot down all of your notes.

This is why it's also important to send any questions you may have as soon as possible. Getting definitive answers can help you land the business. There are plenty of ways to botch a meeting if you're not on time or not prepared.

Following these steps can be the difference between you or your competitor walking away with a new client.

The difference between ordinary conversations and challenging ones is a bit like the difference between canoeing on open water and running rapids. Both involve paddling with balance, but the stakes are much higher and the skills more demanding in white water. Think of a terrible argument you had with someone or a time when you tangled with a coworker. Intense emotions, personal blind spots, and mistaken assumptions can make high-stakes conversations unproductive and even explosive. The boat capsizes, your gear gets soaked, and you wash up on shore somewhere downstream.

Like any journey where risk is involved, knowing how to handle yourself when conversation gets complicated is key. Preparing ahead of time helps clarify what's important, reduces reactivity, and increases the likelihood that we will be able to engage in a way that is in line with our intentions. Paramount to this is our internal preparation:

1. Nourishing yourself before a difficult conversation can help you feel clear, balanced, and well resourced.

This means getting some empathy for any pain, anger, or upset you may feel. Empathy can reduce reactivity and create more space to hear the other person. Find someone you trust, and ask them to listen to what you want to say, and reflect back what they hear. This could be a friend you feel comfortable enough with to help you discern your core needs.

You can also use mindfulness to help sort through your feelings to get at what matters most to you in the situation. Thinking about what you want to say, gently bring awareness to any emotion you feel, asking yourself, "What matters about this to me?" Then, "If I had that, what would I have?"

2. Investigating what's at stake helps us recognize the most important aspects of a complicated or intense situation and can inform our choices about how to proceed.

What do you want from the conversation? Understanding? Resolution? Are you entering with a range of ideas that might work for both people? What specific requests can you make to move forward? Pay attention to any blame or judgments that you hold.

Try to discern what parts of the conversation for you are logistical and which parts are relational. For example, is your upset about the addition to your already full to-do list, or do you feel frustrated that the person hasn’t clearly communicated with you or doesn’t seem to respect your time?

Finally, consider if your goals are realistic. Do you have the capacity to have the conversation in the way you’d like? Does the other person? Is this the right time to have the conversation or even the right person with whom to talk? Are you asking someone to resolve something that they don’t have the power to do?

3. Humanizing the other person requires the humility and empathy to step outside of your own story and consider other perspectives.

If you can put yourself in their shoes and imagine, even for a moment, what might be going on for them, it can →have a profound effect on the conversation. Whatever the situation, however confusing or harmful another’s actions, there is some internal logic behind their choices. Decide how you want to show up in this conversation and focus on that, rather than on proving a point or being right.

Sometimes our best attempts at preparing for a difficult conversation aren’t enough. We get triggered, the other person gets angry, and we realize we’re headed straight for the rocks.

This is when the time you spent running drills—honing your mindfulness muscle—comes in. Tuning in to your body, recognizing your own signs of upset, and skillfully riding the waves of activation can help guide you back toward calmer waters.

Redirecting the River

Conflict can send a cascade of physio-logical effects through our body. Our breathing changes, stress hormones release, and, if we lack skills to meet this swell of energy, our cognitive function alters.

Every time we respond by blowing up, running away, or shutting down, we retrace and strengthen the neural networks for that behavior, like floodwaters carving a riverbed into a hillside. Inundated with stimuli, our sympathetic system prompts us to react with aggression, fear, or confusion, and we fall back on one of the four learned conflict behaviors (avoidance, confrontation, passivity, and/or passive aggression).

With mindful presence and skill, we can shift these patterns by carving new conduits into the hillside of our mind and body, creating different streams for that energy to follow.

With mindful presence and skill, we can shift these patterns by carving new conduits into the hillside of our mind and body, creating different streams for that energy to follow. Progress is incremental, but every drop we redirect deepens the new riverbed, attracting more and more water to change the course of the river of consciousness.

In tough situations, the main thing to be mindful of is our nervous system. You can do this by recognizing when you’re getting worked up, using mindfulness to help navigate the situation, and actively seeking out moments to pause in order to help integrate information and bring the emotion down a notch.

Recognize Activation

Under ordinary circumstances, our body and mind naturally ebb and flow through activation and deactivation, arousal and settling, like waves rocking a boat. Breathing itself follows this rhythm. The elasticity of our nervous system, its resilience, is our ability to navigate this cycle with ease, tolerating the stress of sympathetic arousal, allowing the settling of parasympathetic deactivation, and returning to a baseline state of “oriented awareness,” when you feel relaxed but alert.

During interpersonal conflicts, the sympathetic arousal can snowball. Danger signals get amplified, and—to use a very precise, technical term—we lose it. Our ability to access higher cognitive function in the prefrontal cortex declines and we're along for the ride, like losing our paddle in white water and we get carried along with the churning, wild, and unpredictable rocks and river currents.

If the level of stimulation exceeds our capacity to respond, we freeze. We shut down, withdraw into ourselves, or zone out, effectively ending any attempt to create understanding.

Ride the Waves

Feeling activated is completely natural. Mindfulness doesn't aim to suppress activation or achieve some imaginary neutral state. The goal is to become aware and adept at riding life's waves.

We each already know something about how to ride the waves and handle activation without reacting impulsively. Ever felt the inner agitation of wanting to say something but needing to wait for the right moment to interject? Anytime you relate to that internal pressure wisely—taking a breath, shifting your weight, making a mental note—you're handling the activation. Doing this for even a split second can yield more choice about what to say and when.

Your ability to ride a wave of activation depends on your capacity to tolerate discomfort. In contemplative practice, every time you observe an itch, a knee or back pain, without immediately jerking, you are developing the inner balance to respond rather than react. If the wave is too big, step back, feel the energy in your body, and allow it to dissipate.

The paired practices of pausing and grounding are especially helpful in difficult conversations. Pausing—anything from a micropause to a full breath to a break in the conversation—creates the space to recognize activation. Then, grounding in the body (see practice below) provides an anchor to steady your attention instead of losing your center. Whenever possible, do your best to take things slowly so your system can adjust.

Settle Downstream (aka support deactivation)

Just as we learn to recognize and attend to the arousal, we can also train ourselves to notice any calming. This can occur at many points, during and after a conversation. If we're skilled, we're sensing it all along, continually enhancing these naturally occurring intervals in our nervous system.

Deactivation occurs both literally and figuratively as an outbreath. Any shift in the state of our nervous system is reflected in the breath's pace, depth, duration, or rhythm. We exhale. Muscle tension releases, our jaw slackens, our shoulders relax, our gaze softens, our breathing slows or deepens.

When we give mindful awareness to a feeling of ease or relaxation, it amplifies like a bell ringing, like the stroke of a bow resonating through the body of a cello. Taking small moments to feel the soothing quality of this deactivation nourishes us and strengthens resilience, in conversation and in life.

In conversations, find the transitional space between exchanges or phrases, pauses or breaks in the flow of dialogue. Notice any settling when you complete a cycle of communication.

In difficult conversations, even the smallest amount of agreement, acknowledgment, goodwill, or concession can provide a raft in the flood of words and emotions. If those moments aren't apparent, seek them out. Shift your attention to any sound or the space itself, or use your creativity to insert a pause or take a break.

In difficult conversations, even the smallest amount of agreement, acknowledgment, goodwill, or concession can provide a raft in the flood of words and emotions.

Shepherding a challenging dialogue to some resolution relies on our ability to find these moments. We can do this internally, with our own attention, drawing out small successes by naming and appreciating them.

As you practice with these stages—recognizing activation and riding the waves, noticing deactivation and allowing the churning waters to subside—you will learn to use them in other situations and in shorter periods of time. Simply notice what's happening: The seeing itself creates the possibility for shifting the pattern.

Over time, your body will begin to feel the potential for a new way of relating. You may experience a different order of being in tense situations, as new messages flow through your nervous system: "Ah, maybe I don't need to defend, attack, or try to disappear."

In whitewater canoeing, building skill slowly is essential: Start small in class 1 rapids, taking time to learn. When the waters are dangerous or the rapids are beyond your skill level, pull ashore, unload the gear, and portage to safer waters.

The guidelines for difficult conversations are the same: Slowly your capacity to deal with more difficult situations will grow. You can learn to trust your ability to hear someone else without losing yourself and to have a voice without trying to control or overpower another.

And if you find yourself headed for conversational rapids? You'll also have gained the wisdom to know when your best option might be to steer your boat safely to shore, for now.

A Practice for Grounding in the Body

Use one of these three physical anchors to feel more alert and present in conversation.

1) Notice the Force of Gravity

The downward force of gravity tends to balance the stimulating, upward movement of attention in conversations.

Sit comfortably. Start by taking a few moments to orient to your surroundings, looking around the room. Gently close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to help you settle in. Feel any sensations of weight or heaviness in your body. You might notice your body's contact with the chair, any hardness or give in the surface you're sitting on. You might feel the sense of your whole body sitting, its mass, or warmth. Let your attention rest with these sensations of weight. Can you feel the downward force of gravity? When you notice your attention has wandered, gently let go and bring it back to the feeling of weight or heaviness in your body. Anchor your awareness there.

2) Find Your Centerline

The centerline can bring
a sense of inner strength
and clarity.

Bring your attention to your upper body. Sense how your torso rises up from your waist and pelvis. Can you feel your back, shoulders, and neck? See if you can sense the midline or centerline of your upper body. Try feeling your spine, running from your tailbone, through your back, up to the base of your head. Rock forward and backward slightly, and side to side, until you feel the balance point in the middle. See if you can rest your attention here, on the centerline of your body. Can you feel how your body is upright?

3) Tune into Your Touch Points

Touch points can dissipate the intensity of emotions.

Explore specific areas in your body that tend to be rich in sensation. First, put all your attention in your hands. Feel any sensations there: warmth or coolness; tingling, pulsing, or heaviness; maybe moisture or dryness. Now shift your attention to your feet, feeling any sensations there: temperature, weight, texture, the contact with the floor, the pressure of your shoes. You can try this with any other part of your body that has strong sensations, such as your lips, tongue, or eyes. When your mind wanders, gently bring it back to one of these places.

The Principles of Mindful Communication

Listen

When in conflict, if we aim to listen to the other person first it increases the chances that they will be willing to listen to us.

Notice

Attending to our own reactivity—by noticing the rise of activation and supporting the calm of deactivation (see page 71)—can help us make wiser choices about what to say and when.

Reflect First

People are more likely to listen when they feel heard. To build understanding, reflect before you respond.

Try Understanding

The more we understand one another, the easier it is to find solutions that work for everyone. Therefore, establish as much mutual understanding as possible before problem solving.

Identify Wants

Conflict generally occurs at the level of our strategies—what we want. The more deeply we are able to identify our needs—why we want what we want—the less conflict there is.

Emotional Awareness

Being aware of our emotions supports our ability to choose consciously how we participate in a conversation.

Take Responsibility

The more we take responsibility for our feelings, connecting them to our needs rather than to others' actions, the easier it is for others to hear us.

Hear the Need

The more we hear others' feelings as a reflection of their needs, the easier it is to understand them without hearing blame, needing to agree, or feeling responsible for their emotions.

How to Have a Tough Conversation

If you have choice over where and when to talk, try to set supportive initial conditions: time, place, who's present. Consider how you can lay a foundation of curiosity and care prior to the conversation. For instance, a kind email or a few simple words can let the other person know that you're looking forward to talking and working together to figure things out. If you've initiated the dialogue, ask, "Is now still a good time?" This can create a sense of agreement and mutual respect from the start.

Pay attention to the pace of the conversation. Things tend to move quickly in heated dialogue; a lot of the work is about slowing down. The more you can find ways to naturally pause and deactivate, the easier it will be to stay clear, hear one another, and respond wisely. Taking time to reflect before you respond naturally downshifts the pace of a conversation.

The more you can find ways to naturally pause and deactivate, the easier it will be to stay clear, hear one another, and respond wisely.

Try genuinely to understand. This will show up in your body language, your tone of voice, and other nonverbal communication that supports an atmosphere of goodwill and collaboration. When appropriate, state your intention explicitly: "I'd really like to understand where you're coming from…" or "I'm committed to figuring this out in a way that works for both of us." Such statements can shift the entire tone of a conversation.

Focus on what matters and keep your attention flexible. Instead of belaboring the story of "what happened," listen for what matters to both of you. If you're hearing demands, internally translate them into requests and respond in a way that honors the other person's needs.

If the situation is complex, consider breaking it down into multiple conversations on different days. Your initial pass might just focus on empathy, trying to listen and hear the other person. Next time, share your side and endeavor to build mutual understanding.

For the final pass, explore strategies for moving forward.

The Do Over

Life is messy. In spite of our preparations, training, and best intentions, we all blow it from time to time. In the heat of the moment, an emotion or reaction gets the best of us. A wave of arousal rises, lifts us up, and we crash onto the rocks.

A do-over is like pressing the reset button. We acknowledge where things went awry, restate our intentions, and ask the other person if they'd be gracious enough to let us try again. We can own our part for something as small as a single remark or as broad as an entire conversation. When we take responsibility for losing it, most people are happy to give us a second chance. It's rarely too late to ask for a do-over. Depending on the situation, this may be as simple as making a request:

• "That didn't come out quite right. Can I try that again?"

• "I'm concerned some of the things I said aren't helping. Can we start over?"

• "Things didn't really go the way I was hoping when we talked. Could we rewind and try having the conversation again?"

4.3 MANAGEMENT

Etiquette is all about how you behave in a polite society. It's about using your manners to navigate social situations. When your grandmother shouted "elbows off the table!" or "chew with your mouse closed!" at you, that wasn't her just nagging you about proper etiquette. She was teaching you life lessons that would set you up for success.

Yes, manners do matter in the professional world

We all just spent a year either in complete lockdown or in relative isolation from one another. As vaccine rollout continues to make strides worldwide, restrictions are starting to ease up again. That means that you'll have to go back to being a physical, functional member of society once more. And that counts just as much in your personal life as it does in your professional life.

It's one thing to take a call on Zoom in a nice shirt or blouse and sweatpants. It's completely another to meet with, say, a recruiter, a colleague, or a client face-to-face. Now that business travel is picking up again and we can physically come together, professionals worldwide are realizing that the meetings that matter happen in person.

All business meals, whether business lunches or business dinners are actually very strategic. They give you the opportunity to get to know someone in a non-business setting. Everyone at the table gets to evaluate each other's personalities, characters, professionalism, and even their social awareness.

The unfortunate story of George

George had recently started a new job at Badass Company. He was so excited to have landed an awesome role as a Junior Consultant. It was even in his family newsletter.

Things were going pretty well for George at the company. His boss had even recommended him to manage a big client account just a few months into his role. That, too, made it into the family newsletter. Especially because he got to go on his first-ever business trip to New York.

George met Rachel, Alan, and Lee at Le Bernardin, a fancy restaurant in Midtown. They ordered some wine, shared a few laughs, and talked about business. George thought it had gone really well. He went back to Badass Company ready to be praised!

When he arrived at the office, he realized the client had dropped him. His boss was furious. "I sent you to build our professional relationship with the Awesome Clients, and this is what I hear about you?" yelled Mr. Bossman. George was confused. "What did I do?" he asked. "What didn't you do? You arrived 30 minutes late for dinner. You ordered the lobster—the most expensive item on the menu! You talked with your mouth full and spat food particles at your business associates. And, to top it all off, you kept asking them how much they were earning!"

Yeah, George (like everyone) should have listened to his grandmother.

10 tips to rock business dinner etiquette

Social skills are just that—skills. After a year of limited (or even no) social interaction, it's natural that some might be nervous about face-to-face professional engagements. That's why we compiled this list of 10 etiquette tips to help you leave a good impression and avoid any faux pas.

1. **Show up on time**

We really shouldn't have to tell you this. Showing up on time is Etiquette 101. Don't keep the person or people you're meeting waiting, and certainly don't show up as they're halfway through their entree or appetizer. It's the height of rudeness. Show them you respect them by valuing their time. And never underestimate the value of a firm handshake!

2. Be polite to the wait staff

Again, another obvious one. Treat all restaurant staff with respect. Say "please" and "thank you", as you would to anyone. Don't complain about the service, it comes across as negative and could offend your host if you're overly critical.

3. Don't take calls during the meal

In fact, your cell phone shouldn't be anywhere visible. Keep it off the table, leave it in your bag or pocket, and put it on silent. You don't want the people you're dining with to think you wish you were somewhere else, do you? Show your business partner, client or colleague that it's important for you to be there with them.

4. Dress for the occasion

A good rule of thumb is to go for a "business casual" look for these dinners. There's no need to come fully formal like to a business meeting, but maybe leave the college sweatshirt at home. Make sure your clothes are clean and nicely ironed.

5. Remember there are things you just don’t do at the table
Don’t blow your nose at the table. Especially not into the napkin. Don’t pick your teeth. Don’t double-dip into a common dish, like a sauce or a salad. Chew with your mouth closed, and definitely don’t talk with your mouth full.
6. Drink in moderation
There’s no rule against having fun, just don’t have too much fun. Keep your wits about you. Pace yourself and drink slowly—even if your host or the others on the table aren’t. A good rule to follow is to drink a glass of water per glass of wine.
7. Always serve others before yourself
If you’re pouring yourself some water, always offer it to others first. Pour their water glass first and then serve yourself. The same holds true for any other food or drinks. You should also always ask if anyone wants anything when you order for yourself.
8. Practice proper table manners
Always take small bites of your food rather than large ones. Don't be the first to sit at the dinner table, and let the host order first. Be sure to keep your silverware in the right order, and use it all for what it's meant for. Don't use your salad fork for meat, for example, and hold your knife in your right hand, and your fork in your left hand. Follow the host's lead over when to start your next course.
9. Do not ask for a doggy bag
As a general rule of thumb, this will help you avoid embarrassment. You don’t want it to look like you only came to dinner for the free food, do you? Just leave what you couldn’t finish. If you really liked the food, come back with a friend.
10. Reach for the cheque
If you’re the one who did the inviting, then you’re the one doing the paying. If you’ve been invited out, then it’s up to your host to pay.
Make the move to pay by reaching for your purse or wallet at the end of the meal, but ultimately let your host pay.
Meetings are an indispensable part of every organization’s operations. At team meetings, you make plans, carry out evaluations, and reach decisions.
As you know, meetings are not restricted to just a work environment, although that’s where it’s most used. Teams utilize meetings to rub minds and make plans.
Whether it’s a virtual or physical meeting, meeting etiquette must be followed to ensure efficiency and productivity. Imagine a meeting where everyone is talking simultaneously, numerous phone calls disrupt the conversation’s flow, there’s no meeting agenda, everyone shows up late, and the majority is scrolling through social media. It would be total chaos.
Therefore, every attendee must exude professionalism by adhering to meeting etiquette for a meeting to be productive.
What is meeting etiquette?
Essentially, meeting etiquette is a standard of behavior expected of attendees in a meeting or the workplace.
It’s like table manners, but during business meetings. Everyone participating in the meeting is required to display high levels of professionalism. You shouldn’t act in a carefree manner. You’re to comport yourself very well, be polite in your interaction, and treat everyone with respect.
Meeting etiquettes may vary according to organizations, but there are general etiquettes that apply regardless of setting. For example, in any meeting, you’re expected to listen without interrupting, put away your phones and other forms of distraction, and speak politely.

What is the importance of meeting etiquette?
Without meeting etiquette, meetings would be chaotic.
It's like a society without laws - the outcome is anarchy. Meeting etiquettes are the rules that preserve the sanity of meetings. When followed, they help to keep everyone in check.
To be more specific, meeting etiquette is important because it improves communication in a meeting. Behaviors such as not interrupting others while they speak and addressing others politely and with respect can foster effective communication.
Another thing is that meeting etiquette enhances productivity. Etiquette such as creating and sticking to an agenda, coming early to a meeting, actively listening, and participating are drivers that improve the efficiency of the meeting. And when meetings are efficient, you know it was a good use of time.
Finally, etiquette promotes good relationships within the team. An environment where people feel valued and respected breeds thriving relationships.
Meeting etiquette rules you should know
Choose a convenient time
Pick a conducive location with the right equipment
Create a meeting agenda
Come prepared
Dress decently
Be there on time
Make introductions
Carry everyone along
Don't interrupt others while they're speaking
Mute yourself if it's a virtual meeting
Stick to the agenda
Minimize phone usage
Have a good sitting posture
Be audible
Don't eat and drink (except water and coffee)
Thank everyone for participating
Let's discuss each of these etiquette in detail below. We will delineate them into three sections - meeting etiquette before, during, and after the meeting. Note that this etiquette applies to both virtual and physical meetings. So, ensure you're not falling short of standard in any situation.
Before meeting
Choose a convenient time:
When setting up a meeting, you should work with a time that works best for everyone. Whether it's a virtual or physical meeting, choosing a convenient time is essential.
Participants may dial in from different locations and time zones for a virtual meeting. Hence, in deciding the meeting time, you must consider each time zone. You can ask participants for suggestions on what time works for them.
You might have to compromise when picking a time. But in whatever you're doing, ensure that at least 90% of the participants are comfortable with the timing.
Pick a conducive environment with the right equipment:
The location of your meeting impacts the meeting.
For instance, if there's not enough air ventilation for the number of participants, many will feel uncomfortable and may not be able to participate actively. Similarly, if the room is too

cold, attendees may feel uneasy, and this may affect their participation.
Also, ensure your meeting room has the right equipment. If you are to connect virtually with other attendees in a different location, you should have a functioning audio-video (A/V) technology in the room. Test-run the equipment before the meeting to ascertain its functionality.

Create a meeting agenda:

To give your meeting direction, you should have a meeting agenda. What are the items to be discussed? What are the issues to be addressed? What should be the outcome of the meeting? Have these questions answered before you start a meeting. It would be disappointing and a waste of time for attendees if you set up a meeting without having any cogent issues to address.
Also, share the agenda with the attendees ahead. Ask for input or modifications, if necessary. This will help them prepare well for the meeting.

Come prepared:

Before attending a meeting, look at the agenda to understand what is up for discussion. Most meeting organizers send out the meeting agenda ahead, so check your email to see if you've received it. If it wasn't sent out, you could request that the agenda be shared with everyone or with you personally.
Don't just review the meeting agenda; get relevant materials like a pen and a notepad. If any document is shared in view of the meeting, read through to familiarize yourself with its content. Do a little brainstorming so you can have ideas and suggestions to share and questions to ask.

Dress decently:

The way you dress for a meeting matters. If it's a work environment, you should look professional. In some cases, the organizers may ask attendees to dress down. In such a case, you can take a break from the suit and tie. However, ensure you remain decent in your dressing.
Don't wear revealing clothes or dress shabbily, even if it's a casual meeting. Display professionalism in your dressing - this equally applies to virtual meetings.

Be there on time:

Punctuality is by far one of the most important meeting etiquettes. Imagine a world where everyone shows up for meetings and doesn't keep to time. Do you know how chaotic that could be? Except you have a valid excuse, it makes no sense to be strolling into a meeting 20 minutes in. It reeks of unprofessionalism and disregard for time.
Be punctual. If you're organizing the meeting, start on time and end on time too. If it's going to take longer than expected, request additional time. It shows that you value and respect other people's time.
The ideal thing is to be at the meeting venue at least 5 - 10 minutes before the set time. Remember, this also applies to virtual meetings. Log in to the call early.

During meeting

Make introductions

Chances are there may be a strange face in the room or call. Or perhaps, everyone is meeting each other for the first time. In any case, it is your duty as the meeting organizer to make introductions. Alternatively, you can ask everyone to introduce themselves.

Introductions are necessary because it helps everyone feel welcomed and appreciated.

Carry everyone along:
During the meeting, do well to involve every participant in the deliberation. Don't focus on one wing of the room and neglect the other. You don't want anyone to feel left out.
To encourage active participation, you can solicit questions and ideas from everyone. Before getting to that point, consider starting the meeting with icebreakers to build rapport and lighten up attendees' moods.
Don't interrupt others while they're speaking:
Barbarians talk in thousands. I'm sure you're familiar with that statement.
It is a common meeting courtesy to allow someone to finish speaking before you comment. It would be somewhat rude to cut someone midway into their speech. That's bad communication manners.
There are exceptional cases when it isn't rude to interrupt. For example, when the person is taking too much time or being unprofessional - like using foul language. In that case, you can cut in to take control of the situation.
Mute yourself if it's a virtual meeting:
Ensure you mute your mic when you're not speaking in a virtual meeting. Background sounds from your environment could interrupt and cause a distraction to the meeting.
Whether it's Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams, familiarize yourself with the mute function and other relevant features, and use them appropriately.

Stick to the agenda:
When you create an agenda for a meeting, follow it, especially if it has been distributed to attendees ahead of the meeting.
During meetings, there is a tendency to deviate from the agenda at intervals. If that happens, reroute back to the core focus of the meeting. You don't want it to seem like you told attendees the meeting is about A, and then you go on to talk about C. So, follow the agenda to the letter.
Minimize phone usage:
Scrolling through social media or responding to texts while in a meeting is improper. You should be actively listening and participating. Using your phone can be a distraction. It could even be distracting to others if it makes beeping noises while you're on it.
So, put away your phone. You can put it in your purse or pocket or leave it out of the room. Except it's urgent, don't respond to texts. Put your phone on silence or vibration, and step out of the room if you have to pick up a call.
Have a good sitting posture:
Sit upright or slightly relax on the chair or armrest. But don't slouch! It indirectly communicates to others that you're tired of the meeting or disinterested.
Also, minimize your body movements. Swaying back and forth or sideways could be distracting and unprofessional.
Be audible:
The audience shouldn't have to strain their ears to hear you. After a while, they'd zone out if it's still difficult to listen to you. So, speak out loud and clear. If it's a virtual meeting, check your technology to ensure it works fine.
In a bid to be audible, don't shout. Communicate your points in a clear tone.
Don't eat and drink (except water and coffee)
It is highly unprofessional to eat and drink during a meeting, especially if it's in an office setting. You shouldn't have food or snacks in your mouth when speaking to a client on a

virtual call. It can affect your speech and focus and be distracting.

Water and coffee are allowed in most situations. But don’t make funny noises when you sip your coffee. It could upset a lot of people.

After meeting

Thank everyone for participating:

After the meeting, say a word of gratitude to attendees. Even if they’re your employees and have to be at the meeting, still show appreciation. It’s common courtesy, and it wouldn’t take anything from you.

It also sends a message, especially when you make it a habit. It shows that you value their time and contributions to the organization. And this can encourage them to look forward to the next meeting.

4.4 STYLE OF EATING

Knowing how to manipulate your knife and fork with assurance is an important part of table etiquette. It's difficult to get through a meal or close a deal if you don't know where to place your knife and fork during a meal, or worse, when you've finished eating!

When it comes to dining in North America, there are two styles of eating: American and Continental. Both styles of dining are correct. The trick is to be comfortable with your choice. The golden rule for both styles of eating is whichever style you choose, be consistent; avoid switching back and forth between courses.

The American Style of Eating

Americans and Canadians are probably the only people in the world who use this style, sometimes known as "the zigzag method." It's done by holding the knife in the right hand (unless you're a leftie like me, in which case the opposite is done) and the fork in the left hand. After the knife is used to cut the food while the food is held by the fork, the knife is placed near the top of the plate, blade facing in. The fork is then switched to the right hand and used to pick up the piece of food, tines up. When you pause during eating but have not finished, the utensils are placed in the "resting position" with the knife placed on the right side of the plate in the 4 o'clock position, blade in, and the fork placed on the left side in the 8 o'clock position, tines up. This alerts your waiter that you're not finished. When you've finished eating, the knife and fork are placed side by side on the right side of the plate in the 4 o'clock position, with the fork on the inside, tines up, and the knife on the outside, blade in. This "I am finished" position non-verbally alerts the wait staff to clear your plate. Even though it's obvious you are finished eating, a well-trained waiter may ask, "Are you finished?" Smile and say yes, thank you.

FIG 4.1 American Style of Eating

The Continental Style of Eating

In the early nineteenth century, Europeans ate just as we do now, but around 1850, the upper class stopped shifting their forks back and forth, and the Continental (or European) style of eating became fashionable. A French etiquette book of the time remarks: "If you wish to eat in the latest mode favored by fashionable people, you will not change your fork to your right hand after you have cut your meat, but raise it to your mouth in your left hand."

The Continental style is thought to be a more graceful way of eating, but it does take practice. The fork stays in the left hand, with the tines pointed down, and the knife is held by the right hand. The food is then speared by the fork and conveyed to the mouth.

In between bites ("resting position"), the knife and fork are crossed in the center of the plate, fork tines pointed down. The "I am finished" position is the same as in the American style with one exception: the knife and fork are placed side by side on the right side of the plate at the 4 o'clock position, with the fork on the inside, but the tines are down (versus up), and the knife on the outside, blade in.

Fig 4.2 Continental Style of Eating

Table Etiquette for Both Styles

Once you begin the meal, your utensils should never touch the table, as no one enjoys the site of a soiled tablecloth. It's improper to even allow the handle of a utensil to touch the table while the other end rests on the plate.

When a course is complete, place any utensils meant for that course on the plate, whether or not they were used. For example, if during the salad course you don't use your knife, it still goes on the plate at the end of the course. If you don't put it on the plate, the waiter will do it for you.

4.5 ROLE OF HOST / GUEST

A host is the first person to meet a guest when they enter a restaurant, and they're in charge of the beginning part of the dining experience. Typically only sit-down, dine-in restaurants have hosts, as their main responsibilities are seating guests and managing reservations. To be a great host, a person should be friendly and warm, and always be working to create the best possible dining experience.

Is There a Difference Between Host vs. Hostess?

The words "host" and "hostess" both describe the same job at a restaurant. Typically, "host" refers to a male staff member, and "hostess" refers to a female staff member.

What Are Host or Hostess Responsibilities?

What does a host do? A restaurant host responsibilities include:

Greeting guests

A warm, welcoming greeting is the first step for each guest that walks through the door. Hosts say hi, and welcome the guest into the restaurant.

Taking reservations and managing them

Taking reservations and keeping a well-organized reservation system is one of the most important jobs of a host. Whether they use an online reservation system or a well-work reservations book, the host must be adept at keeping reservations organized. Sometimes, this means also following up with guests who haven't shown up or taking phone calls from guests running a few minutes behind.

Managing a wait-list

Some restaurants don't take reservations, and only have a wait-list for the day of. Keeping the wait-list organized is essential to getting a dining experience off to a great start. This usually involves taking down guest contact information and contacting them when it's time to sit down.

Communicating wait times to guests

Communicating accurate wait times to guests is one of the host's most consistent tasks. Guests tend to take those numbers to heart, so a longer wait time than communicated can be detrimental to a guest's experience and lead them to give up and seek another place to dine.

Managing the seating chart

The host is in charge of allocating guests to tables and getting them seated in the correct section. Maintaining a well-organized seating chart is essential to not overload one server, and making sure work is distributed fairly among the wait staff. Getting good at this task takes time and experience in the restaurant.

Seating guests and distributing menus

In many restaurants, when it's time for a guest to take their seat at their table, it's a host's job to walk them to their table and ensure they have menus to start perusing before a server takes over.

Cleaning and to-go orders

Sometimes, host or hostess job duties may also include managing to-go orders, light cleaning around the restaurant (like wiping down menus and sweeping), and other tasks allocated by the management.

Unless you are an outgoing person, attending an event or party as the guest of a guest can be overwhelming. In fact, there aren't very many people who enjoy it.

However, as with many things we dread doing, if you make it a game, it becomes a little easier – possibly even fun!

Be Prepared

Walking in to a gathering of people armed with no information about the occasion, host, or attendees will only make you more uncomfortable. You'll either spend your time there attempting to catch up or will be so removed from the environment that you leave a negative impression.

As a guest of a guest, preparation is five-fold:

1. Research the nature of, reason for, and if applicable, the history of the event.
2. Know something about the people attending. Your wife's boss? Any VIPs? Someone you've met before who wasn't a nice person? Find out what you can about the hosts and attendees, the companies or organizations they represent, and any

significant accomplishments or projects that would be good to know about and make conversations easier.

3. Select your attire tastefully. Err on the side of conservative.
4. Have a clearly defined purpose or goal in attending. Write it on a card and tuck it into your handbag or pocket. This will keep you from feeling you don't have a place or role among strangers. On the back of the card, you may want to jot down possible topics or questions for mingling and dinner conversation. If you are a bit shy, having done this will provide some relief in case you feel "topic-less" at some point.
5. You represent the person whose guest you are, and others will associate you with that person. The impression you make will reflect on the person who chose you to accompany her to the event. Though of course you will be engaged in conversation with others, your goal will not be to stand out as a shining star. Never assume that what happens at an event, stays at an event.

Your Supporting Role

As an attendee, you will be greeted and introduced politely. Extending your hand after the introduction, or after the host has extended his/hers and introduced himself and perhaps others, your warm smile and "Pleased to meet you," will make others comfortable in your presence.

Don't be off-put if people approach with eyes on the person with whom you are supporting by being there. If someone fails to introduce you, and it feels appropriate, you may include yourself: "Mr. Johnson, I'm Celeste Holmes." The person you are with may or may not say something more about you. The important thing is to not build any meaning into not being noticed beyond greetings.

Your supportive role is very important, even if you are not in the limelight. As a guest, be sure that a proper RSVP is made through the person with whom you will be attending. As any other guest, you will be counted in the preparations for space and food. Check with your partner to make sure it is known that you are attending.

If someone has invited you to attend an event and is paying your way as her date, or if you are invited as a partner or spouse, you are not expected to be a wall flower. However, in a supportive role you will remain in the near vicinity if you are at a cocktail party, and it is fitting if your demeanor is authentically attentive.

It helps to pretend you are at a networking event, ready to introduce yourself and make small talk. The only difference is, you are doing this alongside a friend, date, or spouse. You wish to contribute to the success of the evening by being a good guest. Remain friendly, upbeat and positive.

Guidelines for the Guest of a Guest

Being the guest of a guest makes you somewhat of an outsider. Once you are introduced to other people attending the party or event, you will then be associated with the person who invited you.

Though you are essentially doing a favor for someone, your representation and support of this person will be noticed.

Some etiquette guidelines to keep in mind are:

- Apply a one-drink rule if you intend to drink alcohol. You don't want to be known as "Rachel's rude friend who drank too much!"
- Don't be afraid to be yourself in conversation, but shy away from being the center of attention. If there is a lull in conversation, give others a chance to take the lead in introducing a new topic or telling a story. But if you need to come to the rescue, do so with a neutral subject or event-appropriate anecdote.

- If you are romantically involved with the person whose guest you are, be discreet with romantic gestures.
- When leaving the party or event, courteous and kind words of thanks are called for, but the follow-up thank-you should be made by the main guest.

Attending a party or event as the guest of a guest can be a little uncomfortable. These guidelines, preparation help from the person with whom you are attending, and the acknowledgment that you are appreciated for being so supportive will make the occasion pleasurable.

Unsplash

Most of us grew up going to birthday parties and family dinners, so we're used to be being guests in other people's homes. But it's not all the time that we think about how to behave when we arrive at a someone's house, and there may be some etiquette rules you're forgetting as a guest at a gathering. It can be helpful to be reminded of what's considered polite and what's a big no-no, as you may not even realize some of the mistakes you're making as a guest. Fixing your behavior can help improve your relationships with others — and maybe even get you a few more invitations to some special events.

"Whether you are close friend or family, it's your job as a visiting friend or family member to make your host — even if it's your mother — glad you are there," says etiquette expert Diane Gottsman over email. "Behaving as a good guest shows your host that you are grateful for their invitation. It also shows you respect their home and their personal property."

You might think you know it all when it comes to proper party manners, but here are eight often-forgotten etiquette rules for when you're a guest at someone's gathering.

1 RSVP

Formal RSVPs might seem like a thing of the past, but just because you might be doing it over email or text doesn't mean you are allowed to skip it altogether. "Even if no RSVP is requested, do it anyway," says etiquette expert Sharon Schweitzer over email.

2 Bring Something

It's never a good idea to show up empty-handed, no matter how close you are to the guest — and it doesn't have to be anything expensive. "You should arrive with gifts for your host," says etiquette expert Jodi RR Smith over email. "Some typical hospitality gifts include flowers, wine, chocolates, homemade treats, and more."

3 Help Around The House

It can never hurt to help out. "Make yourself useful by helping around the house, clear dishes, load the dishwasher, etc.," says Smith. Don't linger in the way, but always offer to lend a helping hand, especially when it comes to clean up.

4 Ask Before Using Their Belongings

It's easy to feel comfortable somewhere, but it's always nice to ask before touching their stuff. "Being a guest in someone's home does not automatically grant you access to anything in the closet, cupboards and cabinets," says Smith. "Be sure to ask first if you need or wish to use something belonging to your host."

5 Ask Before Bringing A Guest

Some parties are super casual, but it's always polite to ask about bringing guests. "Don't show up unannounced or with the unexpected," says Schweitzer. "Bringing an extra guest is beyond inconsiderate and is rude to the host who has made special plans."

6 Don't Ask For Something Not Set On The Table

"If anything is not set on the table such as salt-and-pepper or ketchup, avoid asking the host," says Gottsman. "It means they think you can do without it."

7 Mingle With People You Don't Know

It can be hard to break the ice and talk to new people, but it's important not to be cliquey at a gathering. "Mix and mingle with people you don't know," says Gottman. "Nothing is worse for a host than watching their guests conversing in little cliques and not including other people."

8 Thank Your Host Before You Leave

"Find and thank your host or hostess for the gathering," says Schweitzer. "Mention a specific aspect that you particularly enjoyed such as the cuisine. Or the live band on the lawn playing your favorite tunes. Be authentic in your praise and depart on a high note."

Guidelines for a Dinner Party Host

1.Plan weeks in advance

In order to become a successful dinner party host, it is all about good food, good mood! Plan out the menu, location, entertainment, attire, party favors, etc. Before inviting guests or signing up to participate in a group event.

If you plan on cooking for your party, make sure that you prepare enough to allow time for shopping, prepping, and cooking. Delicious food paired with the perfect wine is the essential part of the party.

2. Don’t be cooking when your guests arrive

Instead, just relax and enjoy the time with them, greeting each one as they arrive. It is a dinner party, not a show. You can prepare some sweet treats or a simple dish in advance.

Welcome guests as they arrive with a drink such as a glass of wine in their hand; make it a signature cocktail of your own creation! If your guests are responsible for bringing a dish to share, be certain that they know beforehand what to bring and how much. Have each guest introduce themselves to each other, especially those who arrive together.

3. Sit with the guests and enjoy the party

You deserve a chance to eat! No one wants to be at a dinner party where the host spends most of the evening urging people to eat while they stir something on the stove. Friends want to enjoy the conversation, the food, and the company. Leaving your guest at the dining table without a host is a no-no.

Paying attention to guests is a great way to get more guests to join and participate. You and your friends deserve it! Also, forget about the dish duty until the party is over.

4. Keep the wine flowing

The key to a smooth transition from dinner to party is to keep the wine flowing. Don’t forget to get enough wine from a wine shop. Make sure there is plenty of wine and that the glasses are always full at the dinner table.

Don’t be afraid to pour generously if you don’t want your party to be a below-average dinner party. A good range of drinks is crucial for our guests. It wouldn’t hurt to prepare dry vermouth or homemade sangria.

5. Be ready for the night to end whenever your guests decide it’s time to call it a night

When people are relaxed and comfortable, they often choose to leave the party a night at a much earlier time than anticipated. It would be a bad idea to stop your guest from heading out early. If everyone is about to leave, then maybe you can surprise them with some baked desserts as a party favor as a gesture of thanks for their attendance.

4.6 THANK YOU NOTE

If you have a good business meeting with someone, it can often lead to a great business relationship which could help you in the future. The benefits of a good follow up email after a meeting can be enormous and are often underestimated. Anyone can attend a meeting, but what you do after the meeting tells a whole new story.

Tips on Writing a Follow-Up Thank You Email After a Meeting

Use a Professional Email Signature

You're probably thinking "its not that important", right?Well actually, this is one of the most important steps. Studies have shown that email signatures build trust and convey professionalism.So, if you haven't already got a professional email signature, you can make a free one here.

Don't Delay Sending the Follow-Up Email After the Meeting Don't leave it days or weeks before sending the thank you email after the meeting or job interview. Sending it as soon as you can displays that you valued the meeting. Leaving it too long could make it seem like you aren't interested and that might result in a missed opportunity. The other person may have moved on and had a meeting with someone else because they thought you weren't interested. This is why it's important to send the follow-up email after meeting as soon as possible.

Be Honest

If you aren't interested in what the other party had to say in the business meeting, make it known to them so you don't waste their time. Explain to them what you didn't like, and why you didn't like it. They will likely appreciate that and will respect you for telling them.

On the flipside, if you are interested, let them know straight away so they know where they stand. As above, tell them what you liked and which part of the meeting made you interested in their products or services.

Be Polite

As always, when dealing with business people, you should be polite and remember the manners that your mother taught you! Don't assume just because you had a meeting with them, that you can talk to them like a friend. Remember to remain professional and polite when sending them the follow-up email.

Good Chance for Networking

Even if you decide you aren't interested in the product or services offered at the meeting, it's still a good chance to network with the person. A popular quote that comes to mind is "It's not what you know, it's who you know". Always remain in contact with the person, even if you don't think anything will ever eventuate. One of the biggest keys to success is networking with like-minded individuals.

Don't Burn Bridges

Having contacts in business is a very good thing, and can often lead to rare opportunities in the future. There is a reason that successful business people network a lot. It is because networking can open doors for you that otherwise wouldn't. If you really didn't like the person you met with, that is fine because not everyone gets along. However, don't be rude or condescending to them in the follow-up email as that will burn bridges.

Keep the Thank You Email Short, but Not Too Short

Don't write your life story in the thank-you email after the business meeting. Otherwise, they will likely skim over it and miss any important points you are trying to make.

The best type of thank-you email is one that takes less than 45 seconds to read. Any longer than that, and you might start losing their attention. Don't bore them, give them the quick facts and close off it off with a professional email signature.

Make It Personal, Avoid Generic Thank You Letters

There is nothing worse than receiving one of those generic thank you letters, that you just know has been emailed to about 15,000 people before you. Add a personal touch to the email and make sure they know it has been personally written just for them, by including something like the place where you met them or the time of the meeting. This is best done at the beginning of the email so they know straight away.

How to Structure a Follow-Up Email After a Meeting

Write a Good Subject Line

Using the right subject line in your email can make the difference between success and failure. The subject is what draws the recipient to read the email. There are generic subject lines you can use, or you can use more personal subject lines that are sure to grab the recipients attention, such as complimenting them.

Thank them for the Meeting

This is kind of obvious. Make sure you actually thank them for taking time out of their day to meet with you. Make it known that you appreciate their time and that you enjoyed the meeting or found it useful. Even if you just had a phone interview with an employer, it’s still nice to send a thank you email to them. If the meeting didn’t pan out like it was meant to, then still thank them for their time.

Fig 4.3 Thank them for the Meeting

Apologize If You Were Late to the Meeting or If Something Unexpected Happened

If you were running late for the business meeting or if you had to leave early, make sure you apologize and give them the reason. Most business people will know that sometimes life gets in the way of our plans which causes delays and changes to our schedule. Some people can interpret things like this as rude and it can make you look unorganized, which you don’t want. Apologizing in the follow-up email for being unpunctual will let them know that you weren’t purposely trying to avoid them.

Establish a Common Ground

Establishing a common ground with the other person can be a great way to earn their trust. Having something in common will allow you to speak with them naturally which can help you initialize a great relationship.

If you are an anxious person that has trouble with meeting new people, this can be the perfect way to break the ice which will make you feel more at ease when communicating with them.People will often relate to each other better if there is a common ground. A typical commonality can be anything like knowing the same people from college, having the same interests, or even belonging to the same recreational club.

Summarize the Meeting

When you are at the meeting, make sure you keep notes of all the important points. Summarize them in the follow-up email after the meeting. This will show them that you are organized and good at record keeping. This also helps to ensure that both of you walked away from the meeting with the same idea or agreements that were reached.

There are often situations in business meetings where the parties think they are agreeing to the same thing, but actually aren’t. Putting the meeting minutes in writing will overcome any miscommunication during the meeting so everyone knows exactly what was agreed and what will happen as a result of the meeting.

Organize a Follow-Up Meeting (If Required)

If another meeting is required, make sure you mention this. By asking for another meeting, this shows that you are interested to speak with them again and pursuing the outcome of the first meeting. This shows willpower to achieve results that were discussed in the meeting.

Do What You Said You Will Do in the Meeting

If you promised that you would call them at 1 pm next Thursday, then make sure you do exactly that. Doing the things you said you would do gives off a trustworthy and credible impression which is always looked up upon in the business world. You don't want to be that person that over promises and under delivers.

Common Mistakes When Writing a Thank You Email After a Business Meeting

Spelling and Grammatical Errors

There is nothing more embarrassing than sending a professional email after a business meeting only to find it is riddled with grammatical and spelling errors. Not proofreading the email before you send it is a recipe for disaster. If spelling is not your thing and you just can't detect grammatical errors in your copy, save yourself the embarrassment and use a tool like Grammarly.

Not Changing Placeholder Text

Have you ever been sent an email that still has placeholder text in it? It tells the recipient that you haven't bothered to write the email yourself and that just looks lazy. Your recipient will not feel very special if they know they were just sent a generic email template that you send to all of your customers. This is a really easy mistake to make, but if you proofread your email correctly, it shouldn't happen.

Wrong Spelling of Names

Sending the email with incorrect spelling of the recipient's name is sure to make you look ignorant. If their name sounds like "John", don't assume its spelt that way. There are many ways to spell it…John…Johan…Jon…Jone…Joan and so on. When you are in a business meeting, the best way to get the correct spelling of their name is to ask for their business card. So, before you send the follow-up email, double check the spelling of their name. If their name is spelt differently to the conventional way and you spell it correctly, it shows that you are paying attention to detail.

Writing a Long or Short Follow-Up Email

If the follow-up email is too long, you will either bore them and they won't read it, or they will skim over it too quickly and miss any important points you are trying to make.

If the email it too short, you have likely forgotten to include important details and they will wonder if you were actually paying attention at the meeting. Don't include details they don't need to know. Keeping it short and sweet will ensure their attention span lasts the entire email and that will likely produce better results

Expressing appreciation is second nature for most people, yet this simple act is often overlooked by many.

Sending a thank you note is a practice that frequently gets neglected. Not only is it common courtesy, but it shows a lot about your character and that you spend time building relationships.

What else does it do? Here is why you must send a thank you note and how to develop an effective one that will be well-received.

Why You Must Send a Thank You Note

You had a job interview. Or someone in your spheres of influence facilitated a valuable introduction that led to great results. Maybe you had a positive conversation with a new contact at a networking event or you simply want to show appreciation for someone in your networks.

Following through with a thank you note is something you must do because:

It leaves a good impression. Sending a well-thought-out message that is personal and specific and reiterates what you discussed shows you were present in the moment.

You will stand out. Not everyone does it! So, when you do send one, you will be remembered and it separates you from the pack.

It shows how appreciative you are. The most important commodity people have is their time. And when you extend appreciation for those who give their time unselfishly to others, it goes a long way.

It shows you care. Not only does it demonstrate you actually reflected on the situation, but

you establish just how important that person is to you.
You raise the bar. It speaks to your character that you know how to follow up appropriately and show your thanks. This takes you to a new level of success and enhances your relationships.
Extending gratitude is healthy. Just as networking is good for your health, those who are gracious toward others tend to display lower rates of depression. Consider performing the Gratitude Challenge, which is a beneficial relationship-building exercise!
It really is the proper thing to do. You just can't go wrong by following proper protocol and acknowledging someone else's kindness. Even if you don't end up getting the job offer, sending a thank you note to a hiring manager after the interview shows you have class and consideration. And they WILL remember you!
"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."
Winston Churchill
How to Send a Thank You Note
Extending gratitude is something we are taught at an early age. It is proper etiquette to show when appropriate! Plus, your acknowledgment will be appreciated.
What should you keep in mind to develop an effective thank you note? Consider the following:
Do it within 24 hours. Sending as soon as possible is definitely a habit you should incorporate into your routine which makes it relevant and effective.
Don't just thank them for their time. Remember – your time is valuable too! Show appreciation for their input on an idea, excellent advice, or something unique that you talked about to demonstrate you were paying attention.
And always be sincere when doing so.
Identify the benefits of the discussion. What knowledge did you gain from the conversation? How can you provide something worthy to a project they're working on? What value can you add to their company as a job candidate based on what you talked about? Be specific but remember to keep it short and concise.
Reiterate any next steps. Everyone is busy these days with a lot on their plate, and it's a good idea to add a reminder if appropriate of what each of you is responsible for following up on.
Include your contact details. Do you know how many people forget this crucial step? Always offer a way to be able to reach back out to you, and include a link to your LinkedIn profile so you can
Personally, I'm a big fan of a handwritten thank you instead of an email. As said by Margaret Shepherd in her book The Art of the Handwritten Note: A Guide to Reclaiming Civilized Communication: "In fact, a handwritten note is even more vital now than it was a few years ago because it's less routinely used."
She goes on to say: "… the handwritten note has an intrinsic value beyond its rarity. It's not just an antiquarian curiosity, it's an extremely useful tool." However, given our fast-paced world of technology, this is just not always realistic as people expect a quick response. But if you do it, you definitely distinguish yourself from others.
Need help writing yours? Download our guide! It includes tips and templates that you can customize to create a personal one that effectively demonstrates your appreciation.
At the end of the day, whatever the reason to express gratitude and how you decide to do it, your message must be personalized and authentic. Do not miss this opportunity! Sending a thank you note is an important step to take and a simple way to help you stand out.

4.7 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Mention some important Dining etiquette
2. Discuss few tips for making most out of every meeting
3. Explain all principles of mindful communication
4. How to handle tough conversations?
5. List ten tips to rock Business Dinner etiquette

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. State importance of meeting etiquette
2. Explain Continental style of eating
3. Explain American style of eating
4. Explain the role of guest /Host in general
5. State the significance of Thank you notes.

Multiple choice question

1. Don't write your life story in the ____________ email after the business meeting.

A. thank-you

B. Interview

C. Personal

D. Official

2. Having the right __________ heading into a meeting is crucial.

A. Clothes

B. Mindset

C. Makeup

D. Footwear

3. Being aware of our ____________ supports our ability to choose consciously how we participate in a conversation.

A. Mood

B. Drinks

C. Emotions

D. Data

4. A _________ is the first person to meet a guest when they enter a restaurant.

A. Guest

B. Manager

C. Catterer

D. **Hos**

5. The _____________ style is thought to be a more graceful way of eating.

A. **Continental**

B. Indian

C. American

D. Russian

4.8 REFERENCE

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3. Modern Etiquette Made Easy by Myka Meier
4. Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior by Judith Martin

Rules For The Wireless: Offline Strategies For An Online World

To avoid e-mail mistakes that can cost you business, To place callers on hold and transfer calls with courtesy, To correctly identify yourself when answering the phone, To manage your voicemail greetings and messages and to quickly to return phone calls, To handle smart phones during meetings and other gatherings.

UNIT 5- RULES FOR THE WIRELESS: OFFLINE STRATEGIES FOR AN ONLINE WORLD

STRUCTURE

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this Students will be able to

- Define the concept of wireless communication
- Understand the significance of voice mails.
- Learn how to revert on e-mails
- Explain rules to be followed while holding a phone call.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Wireless Communication is the fastest growing and most vibrant technological areas in the communication field. Wireless Communication is a method of transmitting information from one point to other, without using any connection like wires, cables or any physical medium.
Generally, in a communication system, information is transmitted from transmitter to receiver that are placed over a limited distance. With the help of Wireless Communication, the transmitter and receiver can be placed anywhere between few meters (like a T.V. Remote Control) to few thousand kilometers (Satellite Communication).
We live in a World of communication and Wireless Communication, in particular, is a key part of our lives. Some of the commonly used Wireless Communication Systems in our day – to – day life are: Mobile Phones, GPS Receivers, Remote Controls, Bluetooth Audio and Wi-Fi etc.

What is Wireless Communication?

Communication Systems can be Wired or Wireless and the medium used for communication can be Guided or Unguided. In Wired Communication, the medium is a physical path like Co-axial Cables, Twisted Pair Cables and Optical Fiber Links etc. which guides the signal to propagate from one point to other.
Such type of medium is called Guided Medium. On the other hand, Wireless Communication doesn’t require any physical medium but propagates the signal through space. Since, space only allows for signal transmission without any guidance, the medium used in Wireless Communication is called Unguided Medium.
If there is no physical medium, then how does wireless communication transmit signals? Even though there are no cables used in wireless communication, the transmission and reception of signals is accomplished with Antennas.

Antennas are electrical devices that transform the electrical signals to radio signals in the form of Electromagnetic (EM) Waves and vice versa. These Electromagnetic Waves propagates through space. Hence, both transmitter and receiver consists of an antenna.

Why Wireless Communication?

When wired communication can do most of the tasks that a wireless communication can, why do we need Wireless Communication? The primary and important benefit of wireless communication is mobility.

Apart from mobility, wireless communication also offers flexibility and ease of use, which makes it increasingly popular day – by – day. Wireless Communication like mobile telephony can be made anywhere and anytime with a considerably high throughput performance.

Another important point is infrastructure. The setup and installation of infrastructure for wired communication systems is an expensive and time consuming job. The infrastructure for wireless communication can be installed easily and low cost.

In emergency situations and remote locations, where the setup of wired communication is difficult, wireless communication is a viable option.

Advantages of Wireless Communication

There are numerous advantage of Wireless Communication Technology, Wireless Networking and Wireless Systems over Wired Communication like Cost, Mobility, Ease of Installation, and Reliability etc.

Cost

The cost of installing wires, cables and other infrastructure is eliminated in wireless communication and hence lowering the overall cost of the system compared to wired communication system. Installing wired network in building, digging up the Earth to lay the cables and running those wires across the streets is extremely difficult, costly and time consuming job.

In historical buildings, drilling holes for cables is not a best idea as it destroys the integrity and importance of the building. Also, in older buildings with no dedicated lines for communication, wireless communication like Wi-Fi or Wireless LAN is the only option.

Mobility

As mentioned earlier, mobility is the main advantage of wireless communication system. It offers the freedom to move around while still connected to network.

Ease of Installation

The setup and installation of wireless communication network's equipment and infrastructure is very easy as we need not worry about the hassle of cables. Also, the time required to setup a wireless system like a Wi-Fi network for example, is very less when compared to setting up a full cabled network.

Reliability

Since there are no cables and wires involved in wireless communication, there is no chance of communication failure due to damage of these cables, which may be caused by environmental conditions, cable splice and natural diminution of metallic conductors

Disaster Recovery

In case of accidents due to fire, floods or other disasters, the loss of communication infrastructure in wireless communication system can be minimal.

Disadvantages of Wireless Communication

Even though wireless communication has a number of advantages over wired communication, there are a few disadvantages as well. The most concerning disadvantages are Interference, Security and Health.

Interference

Wireless Communication systems use open space as the medium for transmitting signals. As a result, there is a huge chance that radio signals from one wireless communication system or network might interfere with other signals.
The best example is Bluetooth and Wi-Fi (WLAN). Both these technologies use the 2.4GHz frequency for communication and when both of these devices are active at the same time, there is a chance of interference.

Security

One of the main concerns of wireless communication is Security of the data. Since the signals are transmitted in open space, it is possible that an intruder can intercept the signals and copy sensitive information.

Health Concerns

Continuous exposure to any type of radiation can be hazardous. Even though the levels of RF energy that can cause the damage are not accurately established, it is advised to avoid RF radiation to the maximum.

Basic Elements of a Wireless Communication System

A typical Wireless Communication System can be divided into three elements: the Transmitter, the Channel and the Receiver. The following image shows the block diagram of wireless comunication system.

The Transmission Path

A typical transmission path of a Wireless Communication System consists of Encoder, Encryption, Modulation and Multiplexing. The signal from the source is passed through a Source Encoder, which converts the signal in to a suitable form for applying signal processing techniques.
The redundant information from signal is removed in this process in order to maximize the utilization of resources. This signal is then encrypted using an Encryption Standard so that the signal and the information is secured and doesn't allow any unauthorized access.
Channel Encoding is a technique that is applied to the signal to reduce the impairments like noise, interference, etc. During this process, a small amount of redundancy is introduced to the signal so that it becomes robust against noise. Then the signal is modulated using a suitable Modulation Technique (like PSK, FSK and QPSK etc.) , so that the signal can be easily transmitted using antenna.
The modulated signal is then multiplexed with other signals using different Multiplexing Techniques like Time Division Multiplexing (TDM) or Frequency Division Multiplexing (FDM) to share the valuable bandwidth.

The Channel

The channel in Wireless Communication indicates the medium of transmission of the signal i.e. open space. A wireless channel is unpredictable and also highly variable and random in nature. A channel maybe subject to interference, distortion, noise, scattering etc. and the result is that the received signal may be filled with errors.

The Reception Path

The job of the Receiver is to collect the signal from the channel and reproduce it as the source signal. The reception path of a Wireless Communication System comprises of Demultiplexing , Demodulation, Channel Decoding, Decryption and Source Decoding. From the components of the reception path it is clear that the task of the receiver is just the inverse to that of transmitter.
The signal from the channel is received by the Demultiplexer and is separated from other signals. The individual signals are demodulated using appropriate Demodulation Techniques

and the original message signal is recovered. The redundant bits from the message are removed using the Channel Decoder.
Since the message is encrypted, Decryption of the signal removes the security and turns it into simple sequence of bits. Finally, this signal is given to the Source Decoder to get back the original transmitted message or signal.

Types of Wireless Communication Systems

Today, people need Mobile Phones for many things like talking, internet, multimedia etc. All these services must be made available to the user on the go i.e. while the user is mobile. With the help of these wireless communication services, we can transfer voice, data, videos, images etc.
Wireless Communication Systems also provide different services like video conferencing, cellular telephone, paging, TV, Radio etc. Due to the need for variety of communication services, different types of Wireless Communication Systems are developed. Some of the important Wireless Communication Systems available today are:

- Television and Radio Broadcasting
- Satellite Communication
- Radar
- Mobile Telephone System (Cellular Communication)
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Infrared Communication
- WLAN (Wi-Fi)
- Bluetooth
- ZigBee
- Paging
- Cordless Phones
- Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)

There are many other system with each being useful for different applications. Wireless Communication systems can be again classified as Simplex, Half Duplex and Full Duplex. Simplex communication is one way communication. An example is Radio broadcast system.
Half Duplex is two way communication but not simultaneous one. An example is walkie – talkie (civilian band radio). Full Duplex is also two way communication and it is a simultaneous one. Best example for full duplex is mobile phones.
The devices used for Wireless Communication may vary from one service to other and they may have different size, shape, data throughput and cost. The area covered by a Wireless Communication system is also an important factor. The wireless networks may be limited to a building, an office campus, a city, a small regional area (greater than a city) or might have global coverage.
We will see a brief note about some of the important Wireless Communication Systems.

Television and Radio Broadcasting

Radio is considered to be the first wireless service to be broadcast. It is an example of a Simplex Communication System where the information is transmitted only in one direction and all the users receiving the same data.
Satellite Communication
Satellite Communication System is an important type of Wireless Communication. Satellite Communication Networks provide worldwide coverage independent to population density.
Satellite Communication Systems offer telecommunication (Satellite Phones), positioning and navigation (GPS), broadcasting, internet, etc. Other wireless services like mobile, television broadcasting and other radio systems are dependent of Satellite Communication Systems.

Mobile Telephone Communication System

Perhaps, the most commonly used wireless communication system is the Mobile Phone Technology. The development of mobile cellular device changed the World like no other technology. Today's mobile phones are not limited to just making calls but are integrated with numerous other features like Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, GPS, and FM Radio.

The latest generation of Mobile Communication Technology is 5G (which is indeed successor to the widely adapted 4G). Apart from increased data transfer rates (technologists claim data rates in the order of Gbps), 5G Networks are also aimed at Internet of Things (IoT) related applications and future automobiles.

Global Positioning System (GPS)

GPS is solely a subcategory of satellite communication. GPS provides different wireless services like navigation, positioning, location, speed etc. with the help of dedicated GPS receivers and satellites.

Bluetooth

Bluetooth is another important low range wireless communication system. It provides data, voice and audio transmission with a transmission range of 10 meters. Almost all mobile phones, tablets and laptops are equipped with Bluetooth devices. They can be connected to wireless Bluetooth receivers, audio equipment, cameras etc.

Paging

Although it is considered an obsolete technology, paging was a major success before the wide spread use of mobile phones. Paging provides information in the form of messages and it is a simplex system i.e. the user can only receive the messages.

Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN)

Wireless Local Area Network or WLAN (Wi-Fi) is an internet related wireless service. Using WLAN, different devices like laptops and mobile phones can connect to an access point (like a Wi-Fi Router) and access internet.

Wi-Fi is one of the widely used wireless network, usually for internet access (but sometimes for data transfer within the Local Area Network). It is very difficult to imagine the modern World without Wi-Fi.

Infrared Communication

Infrared Communication is another commonly used wireless communication in our daily lives. It uses the infrared waves of the Electromagnetic (EM) spectrum. Infrared (IR) Communication is used in remote controls of Televisions, cars, audio equipment etc.

5.2 E-MAIL ETIQUETTE

What is email etiquette?

Email etiquette is a set of principles to write or answer emails in a socially or professionally acceptable manner. It includes language, structure, grammar, and tone.

Email etiquette differs based on the recipient and between professional and personal emails. For instance, the emails you send to friends and coworkers are very distinct.

Why is email etiquette important?

Email etiquette helps communicate better and create a better relationship with the recipient. Speaking in person versus communicating over email is entirely different. One phrase in the wrong context could hurt your communications or brand.

That's why following proper etiquette while writing emails is so important because it helps you convey your message clearly. It also helps achieve the following:

Professionalism: Using proper email language, you and your organization will convey a professional image.

Efficiency: It helps you improve your communication skills. Emails which get to the point are much more effective than badly conveyed emails.

Clarity of expression: Use appropriate tone to avoid being misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Protection from liability: Awareness of email stakes will protect you and your organization from costly lawsuits.

Email etiquette trends: past vs present

To figure out how much email etiquette has changed, we conducted a survey using Google forms and sent it to several working professionals through social media and other platforms.

Here, we'll share with you what we concluded from the survey results and how the etiquettes have changed.

Salutation

A few years ago, even the thought of using "Yo folks" to address people in a professional email would have been ridiculous and considered inappropriate.

But with the emergence of more informal workplaces, there has been a blur between casual and professional etiquette.

When we surveyed a few working professionals, we found that nearly 46% of individuals find it appropriate to use casual salutations like "Hey all" and "Yo folks."

However, there are still many people who are uncomfortable with such casual greetings in a work environment. So if you wish to play it safe, you can use words like "Dear", "Hi", "Hello", etc., to address the person you are sending the email to.

Nowadays, some people even send emails with no salutation in the email, and while this might work for some people, it's not for everyone, so it's best to play safe until you get the hang of your work culture.

Emojis

Emojis were once considered too casual but are now accepted in many offices. A whopping 63% percent of people find the use of emojis in emails acceptable, according to the survey we conducted.

They use emojis to make it more expressive and add flair to their emails. And I'm sure Gina Linetti would approve of this etiquette.

But, she is not really known for her professionalism. So if you are not sure if your office would find it acceptable, refrain from using emojis unless other colleagues use them in their emails.

Signoff

Sign-offs are one aspect of the email that has not gone too casual. At least not yet.

Most people used to write "Yours sincerely" initially, but emails are not formal letters, so we have moved on from it.

Now, most people use words like "Regards", "Cheers", "Sincerely", in their emails while signing off.

One-line reply

Short replies of only one line were considered rude and abrupt, but it has become acceptable.

People might use such short responses because they are busy and need to get the point across quickly.

Such short email replies can be sent to colleagues, but when you write an email to someone higher up, we recommend avoiding using one-liners.

15 email etiquette rules to follow (with examples)

1. Use a professional email address

Create and use a formal email address that people can remember. Your email address can be your first name or a combination of your first and last name. You can also use one or two numbers in your email address. Don't use weird names and symbols in your email address.

Do’s

✔ - johnabby@gmail.com

✔ - johnabby@yourdomain.com

Don'ts

✖ - imacreator@gmail.com

✖ - eve18m04@yahoo.com

2. Write clear subject lines

People use subject lines to determine whether or not to open an email. Subject lines should give context to the email copy and shouldn't trick users into clicking them.

Considering email etiquette, use short and clear subject lines. Tell people what they can expect from the email, and never send an email without a subject line.

Do’s

✔ - Email etiquette rules you should know

✔ - Marketing team meeting at 11 AM tomorrow

Don'ts

✖ - FREEDOM SALE!!!!!! GET 50% OFF NOW

✖ - Touching base with you!

3. Maintain a professional tone

More important than what you say is how you say it. To follow email etiquette, keep your tone friendly and polite when writing emails.

Do’s

✔ Provide information that's factual rather than emotional.

Don'ts

✖ Never write an email in ALL CAPS since it reads as shouting and comes out as harsh.

✖ Avoid negative words, humor, and sarcasm in emails.

4. Keep the copy clear and concise

When writing the copy of your email, it's best to start with the core message first and then explain the context of why you are sending the email. Avoid writing long emails with too many paragraphs. Instead, you can use bullets to keep it concise and legible.

5. Mark recipients in the appropriate tags

The people who must take any necessary action relating to the email must be mentioned in the **'To'** field.

For example, you can put your assistant in the 'To' section when sending an email to ask her to change your schedule.

People you don't wish to take action with but who should be aware of the changes can be included in the **CC (carbon copy)** field.

The **BCC (blind carbon copy)** field is where you add recipients whose identities must remain hidden. The people who are added to the BCC cannot be seen by the other email recipients.

6. Read the copy twice before sending

It is one of the most overlooked email etiquette rules. Sending email copies with grammar or spelling errors can hurt your reputation.

Read your email copy and subject line at least twice before clicking on the 'Send' button.

- ✔ Check for grammar, typos, context errors, and formatting errors.

7. Be mindful with 'Reply all'

We are all aware of how many emails we receive each day. Using the 'Reply all' only when essential can help avoid sending unnecessary emails to people. Use 'Reply all' only when all people should be aware of the message.

8. Don't share controversial topics

If you get an email with offensive language (racist, sexist, etc.), don't forward it to others because doing so could harm your reputation.

9. Don't email confidential or private information

Your email remains on the server even after you have deleted it from your account. So, it is preferable to discuss sensitive material in person or over the phone rather than by email.

10. Email signature etiquette

An email signature is the most overlooked part of an email. Adding a professional email signature can help your audience know about you and your business.

Do's

- ✔ Add full name and contact details.
- ✔ Insert photo, company website, and address. [Optional]
- ✔ Add social media links. [Optional]

Don'ts

- ✖ Add no more than 4 to 5 lines
- ✖ Adding image-only signatures
- ✖ Non-responsive signatures

Related guide: Learn how to create a better email signature

11. Avoid excessive abbreviations

Refrain from using abbreviations in business emails as it is considered poor email etiquette. Working professionals don't have much time to read and respond to emails. So write direct words instead of using abbreviations that you only know.

12. Always introduce first

Your recipient will not know you unless you introduce yourself. Mention who you are, what you do, and why you are reaching out.

- ✔ Make your intro short.
- ✔ Mention about your company.
- ✔ State your motive.

13. Shorten or hyperlink the URL

Adding a complete URL to the email content will look messy and affect readability. Instead, shorten your URLs or use hyperlinks to make your emails look clean and easy to read.

14. Check your attachments

Missing email attachments and inserting large files affect email etiquette and contribute to a bad user experience.

- ✔ Check your emails for file attachments before sending them.
- ✔ Upload large files to the cloud and insert the URL of the files.

15. Check your formatting

Accessibility is crucial to ensure email etiquette. Make sure your email format is accessible to all users and email clients.

- ✔ Use standard fonts and proper sizing.
- ✔ Choose black color over others.
- ✔ Test your emails for responsiveness.
- ✔ Don't overuse bold and italic properties.

5.3 VOICE MAIL GREETINGS

Anyone can call your phone at any time. Your voicemail message is like a virtual assistant, standing in your place when you're not available.

For this reason, it's important to have a greeting that matches your personal brand. Even your friends and relatives should be greeted in a way that reflects your values.

Personal Voicemail Greeting Template

A good message for your voicemail consists of five consecutive components:

- **Your usual greeting**
- **A short sentence that you can not make a phone call right now**
- **A request to state the reason for the call**
- **The promise that you will get back to them soon**
- **A short: thank you & goodbye**

For example:

"Hello, I'm sorry, but I can't take your call. Would you please state the reason or concern for your call? I will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you and goodbye."

Be Courteous

Politeness helps to prevent conflict. Being polite in your message also helps to encourage future communication.

Greet your callers as politely as you would if you were face to face. Be consistent with the type of greeting that you would normally use.

For example, if they are accustomed to hearing "Hi" from you don't switch to something else.

Using a greeting that deviates greatly from your typical greeting can be confusing. Some might even wonder if they're calling the right number.

Words that display good manners help your callers to have a good impression of you. Adding "Please" and "Thank You" to whatever you say can make your message more pleasant. Use these along with greetings such as "Good day".

You could say:

"Hello, I'm not available to take your call."

"Hi. I'm not near the phone right now."

"Thanks for calling."

Don't just say: "Leave a message", "Talk", or "Tell me why you were calling".

Be General with Greetings

Some greetings might only be appropriate at a particular time of the day. For example, using good evening on your voicemail message is generally not a good idea. If a caller tries to contact you early in the morning, a neutral greeting would be more appropriate.

For example, instead of "Good morning" you could say:

"Hello. You've reached Trisha."

"Hi. This is John."

"This is Pablo. Thanks for calling."

Be Pleasant

Always create your personal message at a time when you're in a good mood. If you're in a bad mood while you're recording your message, your emotions might affect the tone of your message.

Try to smile while you're recording your message.

Smiling while you're talking to a person on the phone affects your tone of voice. Similarly, smiling while you're recording your message will also help to make your message more pleasant.

Encourage Friends to Say Why They Were Calling

If someone was calling because they needed an address, instead of calling them back you could simply text the address to them.

Similarly, a friend might be calling to remind you of an appointment. Someone else might be calling to give you the information that you need. All of this can be said in their message and you won't necessarily need to call them back to get those details. Instead, you can take immediate action based on their message.

Always ask callers to state why they were calling. It helps you to save time.

You could say:

"Hello. Please leave a message."

"Hi, this is Karen. I'm not available to take your call right now. Please let me know why you were calling."

"This is Kibwe. Thanks for calling. Please leave me a message after the tone."

You should eventually call your friend back. It's good manners to do so. You could also text them or let them know in some other way that you received their message. Ideally, it's good to get back in touch with them as soon as you can.

Get to Your Point Quickly

Some people have voicemail greetings that are several minutes long. It's not fair to assume that a person who is calling you has a lot of time on their hands. They may need to leave a message quickly and being forced to wait during a long greeting can be unpleasant.

Ensure that your greeting is short and to the point. You can make it sweet or spicy without spending a lot of time talking. Your callers will appreciate the thought you put into it without being distracted by its length.

For example, if you want to use music in your message, you only need to play a short clip. Even five seconds of the song that you want to use can be effective and it's much better than playing two minutes of the same song. Remember, while you might like that song, the person who is calling you might not appreciate it in the same way.

A Call Might Be Related to Business

Friends and family are usually the ones who will call your personal number. As such, you might sometimes adjust your personal greeting to match that expectation. However, that's not always a good idea.

Sometimes the person who calls your number might have a business purpose in mind.

For example, your college or even your workplace could be calling. If you've been sending out job applications, a potential employer could be calling.

In every case above, you would want to make a good impression. Don't use abusive language in your greeting. Try to eliminate background noises that can be distracting.

Ensure that your entire message can be heard clearly. Pay attention to your diction and always choose your words carefully. If you're including humor, make sure it's in good taste.

Don't Give Away Too Much Information

Anyone can call your personal phone at any time. Your message shouldn't immediately let them know that you have three children, a new television, and two cars.

Also, try to avoid inadvertently sharing information on the time that you get home or leave each day.

If you’re on vacation and you’re not at home, it’s usually not a good idea to share that information in your voice message. That can make you a target for individuals who have malicious intentions. Some scammers might even try to hack your voicemail.

Some people are so security-conscious that they avoid using their names altogether. Instead of stating their name in their greeting, they use their phone number instead. Whoever’s calling should already have the number. Stating it in the greeting simply confirms that the individual has called the correct number.

In this case, the greeting might say:

“Hello. You’ve reached 345-6789.”

“Hi. You’ve called 321-1234. Please leave a message.”

“Hello. Thanks for calling 456-7891. Kindly leave a message.”

5.4 CALL HOLDING RULES

Most people get a knot in the pit of their stomach when they hear "hold, please," or are transferred during a telephone call, and with good reason. Many people do not know how to handle these situations properly. This article will review the proper etiquette for transfers and holds so that your customers remain on the line and are happy with your handling of the situation.

The Pitfalls of Transfers and Holds

You will have to transfer callers or put them on hold from time to time; it is inevitable that you will face a high call volume or need to have someone else handle a particular customer. It is important that your customers do not feel punished or handed off because they are a nuisance. The best possible outcome is making the customer believe the transfer or hold is in their best interest. How do you achieve this?

Transferring Calls Properly

Nothing is worse during a phone call than suddenly finding yourself talking to an empty line or being cut off mid-sentence, but many of us have had this happen. Someone transfers us to a different person without warning, knowing the other person is better suited to help us. But if a customer service representative does not communicate this, we may feel slighted or even think we have been cut off and simply hang up. Do not lose a customer this way!

There are a few essential elements of call transfer you should never skip:

1. Inform the customer. Let callers know you plan to transfer them, and give them the option to refuse. Your customer's time is valuable. If he or she believes being transferred and retelling the reason for the call is too time-consuming, the customer may opt to leave a message or call back when less pressed for time. The customer could be at a pay phone, calling from work, or on a cell phone. Whatever the reason, a transfer should be made only with the caller's permission. Here's an example:

"Mrs. Ryan, I would like to transfer you to our accounting department. Is that okay with you? I believe that department will be able to get the information you need."

2. Give the caller the transfer information. Despite your best efforts, the call may be dropped during a transfer. It is extremely frustrating when a customer has to call back but does not know whom to contact. This wastes the customer's time. To avoid this, make sure you tell the customer whom you are transferring them to, along with that person's direct phone number. If the call is dropped, the caller can easily reach the correct person directly.

"You'll be speaking to Jessica Turner in accounting. If the call doesn't go through, you can reach her directly at 800-123-9876."

"I'm going to transfer you to Blake Carr in marketing. His direct number is 800-987-5432."

3. Let the customer know what to expect. Some telephone systems have quirks that can confuse a caller. Make sure your callers know what to expect when transferred. Are there a few seconds of dead air? Will they hear a click that may make them think they have been disconnected? Tell callers so they will not hang up!

"When I transfer you, there may be a moment without sound. Don't worry, this is normal and someone will pick up right after that."

"After I transfer you, there will be a short series of beeps. Please don't worry; this is just the line switching. Blake will be with you directly."

4. Always thank the customer! Let your callers know you appreciate their patience and the opportunity to transfer them to the appropriate person.

Interested in learning more? Why not take an online Telephone Skills and Quality Customer Service course?

"Thank you for your patience, Mr. Knox. I'm sure Jessica will be able to get you the information you need."

"Thank you for letting me put you through to Susan. I'm sure she can resolve this situation to your satisfaction."

5. Introduce the caller. If your phone system allows you to stay on the line during a transfer, make a formal introduction. You should tell the person you have called who the customer is and a brief summary of the situation. This will make both parties more comfortable and save time.

"Jessica? I have Mrs. Reilly on the line. She's calling in regard to a discrepancy on her October invoice. Could you help her clear this up?"

"Good morning, Blake. I have Theresa Ruiz here, who would like to talk to someone about our current marketing campaign in the Chicago area. I think you can help her out on this."

6. Make sure the call goes through. If your system forces you to transfer without staying on the line, take notice of whether the call goes through by keeping an eye on the line. If the other party does not pick up the call, get back on the line. You will frustrate customers if you promise to transfer them and all they get is a long wait, listening to the phone ring in an apparently empty office.

If no one picks up on the other end, jump back on the call and offer to take a message or transfer them to voice mail, whichever is appropriate. Customers may leave a message or decide to call back. If they choose to call back, give them the proper contact information (the person, department, and direct phone number) one more time to make sure they have it. Remember, you are not finished with the customer until you are sure they have been taken care of.

To Hold or not to Hold

People do not like being on hold, but it is a fact of life for most businesses, particularly in the customer service arena. You may have to transfer the call, find the customer's file, or answer another line. There are a myriad reasons to put a customer on hold, but you should always give the caller the option to refuse and handle it appropriately.

Never answer your phone with an immediate demand that the person wait on the line. Nothing is more insulting to customers than the impression that you assume their call can wait before you have even spoken to them. The phrase, "This is Acme Company, hold please," followed by dead air or music will often be quickly followed by the customer hanging up in disgust.

Unfortunately, you cannot avoid using the hold function occasionally. Make every effort to keep it to an absolute minimum.

The following statistics demonstrate just how much the "hold" feature is overused:

- In most industries, seven out of ten callers are placed on hold at least once during a call.
- The average hold time is thirty seconds.
- The typical business executive will spend over 50 hours every year on hold.
- More than 30 percent of callers placed on hold hang up without ever calling back.

According to research done by Hold On America:

- After 20 seconds on hold, most callers begin to feel frustrated.
- After 30 seconds, many begin to feel angry.
- After 60 seconds, 30 percent of callers will hang up.
- If a caller is on hold for 90 seconds or longer, more than 50 percent will hang up.
- After two minutes on hold, more than 80 percent of customers will have hung up, and many will never call back.

These statistics reflect two sad truths about putting customers on hold: First, most customer service representatives put callers on hold much more often, and for longer periods of time, than they realize. Second, being put on hold is one of the most frustrating things we can do to a customer, and often results in the loss of a customer.

If you cannot avoid putting someone on hold, be sure to let the customer know what you are going to do and offer the option to leave a message or call back later. Always make sure callers knows why they are being put on hold. If they understand the reason, they are apt to be more willing to wait. Here are some examples of good technique:

"Jerry, could I put you on hold just long enough to grab your file? I'll be able to answer your questions more accurately that way."

"Mrs. Axelrod, would you mind if I put you on hold while I look into that for you?"

"With your permission, I'm going to put you on hold while I go back to my desk. We'll have more privacy that way, Rob."

Notice that in each of the above examples, we remembered to address the caller by name to personalize the call.

Never leave a customer on hold for more than 30 seconds without checking back. If possible, check back every 20 or 30 seconds. It is a simple thing to say, "Mr. Hubley? Are you still there? I'm sorry, it's going to take just one more moment, then we'll take care of your concerns. Thank you for being so patient!" or, "Rachel? Are you still able to hold? It will be just a moment longer."

If you have someone on hold for two or three minutes, you should take a message or transfer them to voice mail rather than continuing to keep them on hold. The longer customers are on hold, the more frustrated they become, which will make it more difficult to resolve their problem when you do get back to them. Instead, take a detailed message and make sure you follow up by calling them back as soon as possible. This is helpful to you as well. If you know someone has been on hold a long time, you may rush or get flustered, which is not helpful at all.

Proper transferring and on-hold etiquette are essential to retaining customers and keeping them happy. With practice, you will become an expert at knowing when and how to use these time-saving features.

5.5 IDENTIFYING CALLS

Communicating on the phone remains an important task for many professionals. Despite digital customer service communication advancements including email, texting and automated answering services, customers and coworkers continue to use the telephone as their initial point of contact. Learning about how best to talk with others through this medium in the workplace can help you improve your communication skills.

In this article, we provide a definition for phone etiquette to improve the quality of your phone calls and describe why phone etiquette is important.

What is phone etiquette?

Phone etiquette is the way you represent yourself and your business to customers and coworkers through telephone communication. This includes the way you greet a customer, your body language, tone of voice, word choice and how you close a call. Etiquette also involves how you listen to others when discussing professional topics. You might use this form of etiquette when interacting with customers or working with others within your organization.

Show professionalism: Showing professionalism entails how you represent your company with a positive attitude and knowledge. Communicating your working knowledge to your callers using telephone manners should establish you as a professional worthy of repeat business dealings.

Create a good first impression: The initial phone call with a customer is your opportunity to show the customer how pleasant it is to conduct business with you. Creating a memorable experience can influence them to recommend you to others or purchase more products.

Increase customer trust and loyalty: If you have a positive interaction with customers on the phone, customers may feel more comfortable having more meetings or discussions in person or through other channels. This can help build your reputation and increase customer loyalty.

Achieve high customer satisfaction ratings: When you meet customers' needs over the phone, they can accurately assume that you can continue to meet their needs in person, creating a consistent experience.

Answer the call within the first two or three rings

Providing a quick answer to customers' phone calls should let them know that their business is important to you. When customers feel valued, they could be more likely to use your business. If you can't answer the phone because you have clients in front of you, check the voicemail box frequently and call back as soon as you're able.

Identify yourself and your business at the beginning of calls

Identifying yourself and your business at the beginning of a call lets the customer know that they called the correct place. When you identify yourself, the customer can explain the reason for their call quickly rather than asking additional questions. This can apply if you're calling customers or coworkers, too, so they know immediately with whom their speaker.

Be positive

Offering a positive tone of voice builds rapport, as the receiver becomes more open to sharing details about how you can best assist them with their needs. If possible, practice by recording your phone calls. Listen to the call recording, notice your tone and make corrections as necessary. Positivity can also help you turn negative calls into better situations, showing that you want to help customers and coworkers.

Minimize interruptions

Minimizing interruptions is possible, even in offices with ample foot traffic. Take a moment before answering a call to put aside items you were working on and prepare to give your full attention to your caller. For instance, try turning your back away from your crowded office when you answer phone calls, this way other individuals in the room know you're unavailable to assist them while you're on the telephone.

Actively listen and take notes

When listening actively, it can be beneficial to give periodic affirmations that you understand the customer. For example, you could say, “I understand that you would like to return your product” or “Thank you for sharing your concerns.” Keeping a record of the conversation by taking notes can ensure that you remember and respond to all the customer's concerns effectively. Active listening can also mean asking clarifying questions to help better assist others.

Remain honest

Honesty is more important than trying to make your customer happy. If there's something you know you can't do for them, make them aware that you cannot perform the task they request. Deliver the honest message in a polite and sympathetic way and your customer may still have a positive experience with your business after the call is over, even though you could not meet all of their needs.

For instance, you could say, "I understand your concerns, but unfortunately, we cannot approve your request.” If you know of additional resources that the caller can use to meet their needs, you can provide them before closing the call.

Ask the caller before placing them on hold

You may need to place a caller on hold to get more information for them. For instance, you could say, “Would you mind if I placed you on a brief hold to better assist you?” Asking the caller before placing them on hold allows them to know you're working on assisting them to the best of your ability and it displays professional courtesy. This can help you to handle other requests or situations that might be higher priority.

Minimize emotional reactions

Try to keep your tone of voice positive, even when conducting difficult conversations. Find a break in the conversation and ask the caller politely if you may place them on hold. While a customer or coworker is on hold, take two deep breaths and remember to be objective and empathetic when faced with a challenging caller. If possible, you can refer callers to other employees or a manager if you feel yourself being emotional.

Ensure you meet the caller's needs before closing the call

Making sure you meet the customer's needs is usually your goal when answering a phone call. The customer may often forget about other questions they have during the conversation. Asking if you met their needs or if they have questions is a great opportunity to be proactive and provide further clarification.

When you think of call screening, you likely imagine a feature that’s used be people at home trying to avoid calls from telemarketers or other folks they want to avoid.

With the advent of caller ID, call screening is a feature that many people don’t even use. What many don’t realize is that there are still some great uses of call screening even in a world where you can see at a glance where a call is coming from. Not only that, but call screening can be a very powerful tool for your business.

You might be dubious, but your business really can benefit from call screening. If you don’t believe us, here are just a few of the ways that our call screening feature can provide a definite benefit to your employees and your business as a whole.

Identify the Caller

You might think that there's not much need for call screening if you have caller ID.
Just because a caller ID entry pops up doesn't mean that you know exactly who is calling from that number, however. Activating call screening lets you find out exactly who the caller is and make a decision on whether to take the call or let it pass to voicemail.
This ability especially useful if you receive a call from business numbers that are shared by several possible callers but only one is the one you want to talk to.

Identify the Number Called

Call screening doesn't have to be seen as an alternative to caller ID.
In fact, the feature has caller ID integrated into it. When you receive a call while call screening is active, you'll see which number is calling.
Gone are the days where screening meant that you had to let the answering machine pick up and listen to the message being left; call screening has gone high-tech and provides you with as much information as possible to help you decide whether to take the call.

One-Touch Accept and Reject

When a screened call comes through, you have three options: You can accept the call, reject the call or let it keep ringing and pass on to voicemail.
If you're trying to decide whether to accept or reject, both options are easy to access; you simply need to select one of the options using our one-touch interface.
Whether you pick the call up or reject it, your choice is as simple as tapping one of the buttons in the call screening display.

Hands-Free Audio Prompts

Since the workplace can be pretty busy, our call screening feature does its best to give you valuable information without interrupting what you're doing.
Instead of having to pick up the phone or come over to the display, audio prompts provide you with all necessary information so you can decide whether to accept or reject a call.
You don't even have to make a selection if you're too busy; once you know that you don't want to take the call, simply letting it ring will transfer the call to your voicemail and let you check the resulting message later.

Intracompany Communication

Though many see call screening as an option used to evaluate external calls, it can actually be very useful for intracompany calls as well.
Screening your calls lets you see whether the caller is external or from within the company. If you're only fielding external calls, you can pass on the intracompany calls that come through.
Likewise, if you're expecting a call from another department you can be sure that the call comes from within the company before you pick up the phone

"Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. The friends who listen to us are the ones we move toward. When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand." –Karl A. Menninger.

It has been observed that humans usually have just about an 8-second attention span and with so many distractions around us, we often fail to follow what the other person is saying. And it's vice-versa – so when you speak your heart & mind to someone, there are chances that you've not been listened to, fully.

In today's fast-paced life, we all need someone who would listen to us. Needless to say, effective listening is one of the most valuable skills one can acquire and it is one of the key elements to nurture our relationships – both personal and professional.

When you're at work, effective listening would help you to be more productive making fewer error. At home, it'll help you weave stronger bonds with your close ones.

"The art of conversation lies in listening." – Malcolm Forbes

Genuine listening has become rare, but if practiced well – it can build relationships, sort out various problems, resolve conflicts, enhance understanding and boost accuracy. Wondering how to become a better listener?

Here are 7 useful ways in which you can develop your effective listening skills.

- Ways to improve your listening skills:
- 1. Always maintain eye contact with the speaker.
- 2. Don't interrupt while someone is speaking.
- 3. Keep an open mind while listening.
- 4. Don't come up with instant solutions!
- 5. Try to visualize what the speaker is saying.
- 6. Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.
- 7. Try to understand what's not said out loud!

Ways to improve your listening skills:

1. Always maintain eye contact with the speaker.

Our body language plays a vital role while communicating with someone, and always make sure to look into the eyes of the person who's speaking to you.

It's not like you need to stare without blinking, but just have a gentle glance, ensuring that you're mindful of what he/she is saying.

When you are listening to someone talk, you should avoid looking out of the window, texting or scrolling through your phone, etc.

Your gestures will encourage the person to continue expressing himself/herself, without any inhibitions.

It is also important to express that you're listening – by nodding (maybe). Along with eye contact, occasionally nodding and smiling are signs of a good listener. This will reassure the speaker that you're attentive, through your expressions.

"The eyes are the mirror of the soul and reflect everything that seems to be hidden; and like a mirror, they also reflect the person looking into them." – Paul Coehlo.

2. Don't interrupt while someone is speaking.

Most of us are too impatient to listen to what someone's saying, and even before they finish, we start speaking our own minds!

But that shouldn't be done. Instead, we should let the other person finish and cultivate patience before rushing to reply!

When we hurry in replying, it shows that we don't care much about what's been told to us – rather focus more on sharing our opinion about the matter (which, most of the time, is unwanted!).

Interrupting a conversation often sends the wrong message to the speaker. It may seem that what you have to say is more important, than what they are saying.

3. Keep an open mind while listening.

I know that it gets too difficult at times to not make any judgments while listening, but if you practice, you can surely ace this skill.

When we judge a person while they tell us their story/experiences/opinions etc., our effectiveness as a listener is highly compromised. We end up jumping to conclusions ever before the person finishes talking.

It's important to remember that when a person is expressing themselves, they are making an effort to use language to represent their thoughts and feelings, and as a listener, it's your duty to respect that effort of expression.

While some people can articulate their thoughts very easily, many people can't – and thus, it's important to be mindful as a listener.

"You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time." –M. Scott Peck.

4. Don't come up with instant solutions!

If someone is sharing their problems with you, refrain from suggesting an instant solution. Most of the time, people aren't seeking your advice anyway!

When they would need an advice/solution, they'd ask for it. Be calm while listening and then if you strongly feel that you've got a brilliant suggestion to offer, ask politely – "Would you care to know my ideas?/ Can I say something to help?"

5. Try to visualize what the speaker is saying.

Like I mentioned before, we often get distracted while having a conversation. But if we try to visualize what we're being told, then not only will it enhance our listening but it'll also help us to retain the information.

It doesn't need to be an exact picturization, but an abstract reframing of the events related to the topic will surely help you in staying focused.

In case your thoughts start to wander, you can refocus on the visuals and get back in track once again, listening to what's being told.

6. Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.

There's no harm in asking questions (infact, it's a sign that you're interested in the conversation) – but make sure not to interrupt the speaker. Wait for them to pause, and then ask your question.

Also, be polite while choosing your words and try to ask specific questions, rather than making them repeat the same thing again and again.

If there's something that you didn't understand, apologize and seek further clarification. And to experience empathy, you have to put yourself in the other person's place – which you can only do when you've been listening mindfully and have all your doubts cleared.

"One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say." – Bryant H. McGill.

7. Try to understand what's not said out loud!

If you are attentive enough, you'll notice that there are certain non-verbal cues hidden in a conversation.

Often, due to distractions, we miss out observing those hints – and thus, fail to understand what the other person is trying to convey. When you have a conversation over a phone call, the voice and the tone of the person often discloses their mood.

When I talk to my best friend, it doesn't matter what we chat about, if I hear a lilt and laughter in her voice, I feel reassured that she's doing well. Similarly, over text messages, usage of emojis can define the mood of the person.

While having a face to face conversation, it's easier to feel the pulse of the person and understand their mood. To be a good listener, it's very important that we understand what it the speaker's state of mind.

Listening mindfully is an art and we can hone this skill only through practice. Your listening skills will also be nurtured by your curiosity and genuine interest in having a conversation.

Be aware when you're having a conversation with someone, and once you get back to your own space, try to remember the important cues and jot them down.

This would enable you to understand how attentive you've been as well as help you in future conversations.

5.6 HANDLING SMARTPHONES

Everyone hates it when others check their smartphones or other mobile devices during a meeting. And yet everyone does it.

In a recent survey by Robert Half Management Resources, only 6 percent of managers said they thought it was OK to pull out a mobile device and view messages and/or email during a meeting. The remaining 94 percent thought people should never check their smartphones, or only to deal with something urgent, or only if they excused themselves and left the meeting while doing so. That sentiment is particularly strong among small business managers. About 40 percent of those from companies with fewer than 100 employees saying that smartphone use in meetings is never OK.

With bosses so firmly aligned against smartphone use in meetings you'd think it'd be a rare occurrence. But of course it isn't: Two thirds of managers reported that smartphone use in meetings was either very common or somewhat common in their experience. Maybe it's like showing off vacation pictures: We dislike it when someone else does it but think it's just fine when we do it ourselves.

What to do? Assuming you're part of the 94-percent majority, how can you reduce--or maybe even eliminate--smartphone use during your next meeting? Here are some ideas to try:

1. Make the rules clear.

Movie theaters across the land tell audience in so many words that texting during a feature is unacceptable, yet some people continue to think that it's fine. The same may be happening in your own conference room. You're the boss, so it's up to you to articulate the rules, whatever they may be: "If you must use your smartphone, excuse yourself and leave," or "Only use your smartphone for an emergency," or "I expect that your smartphone will be left at your desk."

2. Then follow them yourself.

"Do as I say, not as I do," doesn't work in parenting, and it doesn't work in management either. So if you've laid down a smartphone ban in your meetings, you better leave your own phone behind as well. Otherwise you'll just lose respect from your employees, and they'll be tempted to try to sneak peeks at their own phones when they think you aren't looking.

3. Don't waste people's time.

Employees will be much more tempted to check their email if they're sitting through a recap of things they already know, or not-really-listening to a lot of discussion that does not pertain to them. Any time someone might be tempted to doodle, they'll be twice as tempted to check their smartphone, which is both much more appealing and has the potential to actually be productive.

So don't waste people's time. If the next 15 minutes doesn't concern half the people in the meeting, invite those people to leave and return, or step into the hallway (where you'll have provided comfortable chairs) while they aren't needed. Don't start the meeting by reviewing what everyone already knows. And don't have more meetings than you need in the first place.

4. Don't be boring.

It's hard enough to lead a meeting, let alone be entertaining while doing so. But do it if you can, perhaps by carefully going over the material that needs to be covered and thinking how to present it in the most engaging, unexpected way. Don't let others be boring either. You need to give people the opportunity to express their points of view, but if someone is rambling, argumentative, or focusing on minutiae, cut that person off politely before you lose everyone else.

5. Stand up.

Some companies hold meetings while standing. That won't work all the time of course, but it's great for things like daily or weekly check-ins. That encourages you and everyone else to keep things brief and to the point. And it makes it much harder to check a smartphone, especially without being seen.

6. Plan for smartwatches.

CES this year is dominated by smartwatches and with Apple's entry into this market coming in March, smartwatches will soon be truly ubiquitous. With smartwatches, people can check their text, email, and social media messages without ever touching their phones. And you can't reasonably instruct people to take off their watches before entering a meeting.

Smartwatches are new to the workplace, and most companies don't have policies about them yet. To complicate matters, many commonly used fitness trackers also provide email and texting. Whatever policy you set about smartphone use in meetings should take smartwatches and fitness trackers into account as well.

7. Handle millennials thoughtfully.

Millennials are more likely to use smartphones than any other age group, and also more likely to depend entirely on mobile devices for all their computing activity. Smartphone use is, of course, a millennial stereotype that may or may not apply to individuals at your company. But many millennials grew up with smartphones around in a way that their elders did not and that may affect their view of what constitutes normal or courteous smartphone behavior.

8. Consider the possible advantages of smartphones in meetings.

If smartphones in meetings seem like nothing but a negative, consider how quickly they can be used to grab a quick answer to a question, find a statistic, or check on the status of a project. Among some social groups, using smartphones' voice commands is considered more polite because it can make them seem like another participant in the conversation--one who can contribute useful information when needed. Whatever your approach, it may be better to use smartphones as a tool than exile them completely.

Either way, it's smart to set boundaries around smartphone use in meetings. Consider your company's culture, the meeting participants, the meeting purpose and the mood you're trying to set. Then create a smartphone policy that will help you get there.

Although smartphones and mobile devices have become so ubiquitous it can be hard to remember a time without them, they are still relatively new features of modern life. While many people keep their smartphones handy at all times, not everyone may be aware that new social standards and courtesies have evolved around these devices and their use.

It is common to see people using them throughout the day, even when it may not seem appropriate for them to be doing so. As such, it is important to be able to understand what is and isn’t appropriate in terms of cell phone usage during different situations — for some scenarios it may even be seen as disrespectful.

General mobile phone etiquette.

There are specific etiquette points that one should keep in mind for certain social situations, such as introducing yourself, not interrupting, and saying please and thank you. However, there are also more generalized rules that should be followed in regard to cell phone use. Here are some universal cell phone etiquette tips to keep in mind:

Although it may be tempting, avoid texting during face-to-face conversations

Avoid accepting calls when you are in the middle of a face-to-face conversation;
Avoid discussing personal topics in an area where others may hear you;
Avoid using inappropriate pictures for a person's contact photo;
Be aware of the delay between when you speak and when the other person hears it;
Be mindful about what you tag people in on Facebook;
Don't light up your screen in a dark theater;
Don't talk/text and drive;
Use your Call Filter app for suspicious calls, but avoid using it for friends and family;
End the continuing game of phone tag after 4 attempts of reaching out to an individual;
Keep a distance of at least 10 feet from the nearest person when talking on the phone;

Put your phone on silent mode in theaters, restaurants, plays, performances, and any other group setting where a ring tone may be bothersome;
Refrain from blaming the other person if there is a dropped call;
Speak in a soft tone when taking calls in public;
Try not to look things up ("fact check") during a conversation, unless you are asked to.

Etiquette for cell phones on dates.

Dating, in general, can be stressful. Individuals may feel the need to impress their date and present themselves well, especially during the early stages of the relationship. Some may partake in phubbing, which is when an individual begins to pay less attention to someone who is talking and more attention to their phone instead — this may be because of nerves, boredom, or out of habit. While it may not be necessary to completely disregard using your phone at any time while on a date, it is important that you be mindful of how you do so. Here are a few tips for proper date night phone etiquette:
Ask your date if they would be bothered by you taking pictures of the food, scenery, etc;
Don't continuously show them things you've found on your phone. One or two items may be alright, however, refrain from showing them your entire social media feed, even if you find the content funny;
If able to, you should both put your phones away in your bag or pocket;
Let your date know ahead of time if you're expecting an important phone call at any point during your time together;
Refrain from nervously going onto your phone;
Set your phone on silent.

Etiquette for cell phones at work.

Prior to following any workplace cell phone etiquette advice, one should first review their specific workplace's phone policy — this policy should take precedence over any outside advice that is given.

Generally speaking, some businesses are becoming more accepting of phones in offices, being more aware that it is possible to maintain workplace productivity in an era of smartphones — as "convenience is a crucial aspect that all organizations and firms look to obtain for their employees. Smartphones provide the ability for employees and clients to communicate and contact one another quickly and efficiently."

If you are a part of a business that allows you to use your phones, it is important to follow proper cell phone workplace etiquette to help reduce the chances of you getting these privileges taken away.

Be aware of your ringtone. If you work at a business that requires you to answer your cell phone often you may want to download a ringtone that sounds professional (no high pitches, isn't too loud, no obnoxious sounds, no profanity, etc);

- Don’t look at your phone during meetings;
- Don’t place your phone on your lap;
- Focus on the person that should have your attention i.e. customer, client, coworker, boss, etc;
- Keep your personal calls private;
- Keep your phone out of sight;
- Don’t engage in arguments over the phone while at work;
- Silence your device.

Etiquette for cell phones at professional gatherings.

Just as with informal gatherings such as dates and some workplaces, there are cell phone etiquette tips to keep in mind for professional gatherings such as conferences, training sessions, seminars, product launches, and more:

- Don’t take photos unless you’re allowed to;
- Don’t use your phone as a way to avoid social interactions;
- Focus on face-to-face networking;
- Keep your phone on silent;
- Verbally excuse yourself for important calls when necessary;
- When you do take photos, turn off your flash as a courtesy to others around you.

When to not use your cell phone.

In some scenarios, it is unacceptable to use your mobile phone entirely, despite taking the above etiquette tips into consideration. The following list outlines different situations when you’ll want to avoid your phone altogether:

- At movie theaters and other large gatherings of any kind;
- Attending church;
- While giving birth;
- During a job interview;
- Funerals;
- When someone is talking to you;
- While driving;
- While you’re eating a meal;
- While you’re studying.

How often you use your cell phone is entirely up to you. However, when doing so, keep in mind that there is a time and place for it. By following the above cell phone etiquette guidelines, you can ensure you’re not being disrespectful or breaking any rules and are mindful of those around you.

Smartphones have permeated every part of our lives. We are absorbed by them even when we’re walking, we check them when we’re waiting in lines, and even consult them the minute we have a question (before trying to remember the answer first). With so much reliance on our phones for everything from social interaction to information gathering, it’s important to establish some ground rules that ensure we don’t spend more time interacting with our phones than the real world around us. After all, our smartphones are meant to be accessories to our lives, not our lives themselves.

Here are some essential rules to help you know how and when it’s appropriate to use your phone in the workplace, at home, and in public:

5 Rules for Using Your Smartphone in the Workplace

1. **Check Your Phone Only on Breaks.** When you’re at work, you’re getting paid to…work. Not to spend time playing around on your smartphone. Unless it’s work related,

or unless you have an emergency and are waiting to receive a phone call, it's only fair that you don't use your phone until you have a break.

2. **Know Your Company's Privacy Policy.** Especially if you've signed a nondisclosure, your company might have a privacy policy that precludes you from revealing certain information about procedures or products. So, before you take any pictures or workplace selfies with your smartphone, make sure the frames don't expose anything your company would consider confidential.

3. **If It's Not Business, It's Personal.** When you're at work, you will want to tuck your phone away, even if you're not checking it. If management sees it out, it's assumed you're using it.

4. **Don't Abuse Smartphone Privileges.** Some companies don't mind if their employees shoot off a quick text message from time to time. The problem is that some employees don't stop there. Remember that just because your management is lenient about text messages, it doesn't mean they'll be okay with you playing Candy Crush between tasks!

5. Keep Management in the Loop. If you need to make a personal call or have your phone around for an emergency, let your manager know what's going on. This way, he or she will know you don't intend to use your smartphone for any reason other than the one you mentioned.

5 Rules for Using Your Smartphone at Home

1. **Don't Bring Your Phone to Bed.** If you're in a relationship and sharing a bed with your significant other, strongly consider banning smart phones from your bed. You should be cuddling and basking in your lovey-dovey couple's happiness, not rummaging through social media updates or texting other people. (Even better, relegate your phones to charge overnight in another room than your bedroom.)

2. **Be Respectful.** Whether you live with roommates or a partner, know that the home is a place everyone should be able to go to unwind. Make sure not to play games on your smartphone with the sound turned up or answer a call in the same room as someone else is trying to relax.

3. **Don't Talk in the Bathroom.** There's nothing like being on the other end of the line and hearing the flush of a toilet. No one wants to picture you doing private things while speaking to them about Saturday night's dinner plans.

4. **Don't Text Message Someone in the Next Room.** If you have something to ask someone who is in the same house as you are, ask them in person. If you send a text message, instead, you may be considered passive-aggressive.

5. **Observe Quiet Time.** When other people in your home have gone to bed for the night, turn off the sound on your phone, so as not to disturb the silence. And if you need to take a phone call, make sure you do so in a place where you won't wake anyone up.

5 Rules for Using Your Smartphone in Public

1. **Watch Your Volume.** Your smartphone has all sorts of alert noises – from notification sounds to those of incoming calls. Think about it: If everyone in your location were to receive alerts simultaneously, each with a unique sound, there would be absolute chaos. An easy way to avoid contributing to this? Switch your phone to vibrate when you're in public.

2. **Take Your Calls Outside.** Whether you're in a café, restaurant, or at a friend's house, you should take your phone conversations outside. If it's not possible to move

outside, at least excuse yourself from whomever you're with and go somewhere where you can speak freely without disturbing anyone around you.

3. **Give Your Friend a Head's Up.** If you're out with a friend, let him or her know from the outset that your time with him or her may be interrupted. Generally, it's polite to keep your phone off the table and give your friend your undivided attention, but the importance of an emergency situation might demand an exception. You can simply give your friend a brief explanation as to what's happening, so that he or she understands why the communication is worth interrupting your time together. Then, when you do receive the phone call or text message, make sure to apologize to your friend before proceeding to respond to it.

4. **Consider Your Location.** If you're in a bus or a train or some other tight space with others, try to avoid phone conversations. No one should be forced to listen to your entire conversation. But if you must speak on the phone, make the conversation as brief as possible and keep the language clean!

5. **Don't Talk at Checkout.** It's considered exceptionally rude to talk on the phone while you're making a payment transaction at a place such as a cafe or a grocery store. Some businesses will even refuse a potential customer service if he or she walks up to a clerk while on the phone. Put your phone away for the minute it will take to check out.

When it comes to smartphones, everyone seems to have a different opinion as to what constitutes proper conduct. At Altitude Integrations, we want to ensure your relationship with technology enhances your life and doesn't detract from it. If you stick with these rules, you'll at least have some guidelines to follow that aren't likely to change any time soon, giving you a foundation for proper smartphone etiquette.

5.7QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Explain in detail what you mean by wireless communication
2. State a few advantages and disadvantages of wireless communication
3. Why is email etiquette important?
4. List some examples of voice mail greetings
5. Mention the cell phone etiquette required at professional gatherings

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Why is wireless communication important?
2. List a few types of wireless communication systems
3. Explain essential elements of call transfer
4. How to improve listening skills?
5. Explain in detail smartphone etiquette

Multiple choice question

1. _______Communication is a method of transmitting information from one point to other, without using any connection like wires, cables or any physical medium.

A. Wireless

B. Wireful

C. Verbal

D. Signal

2. Use __________ tone to avoid being misunderstood or misinterpreted.

A. **Appropriate**

B. Inappropriate
C. Friendly
D. Strict
3. Despite your best efforts, the call may be dropped during a ___________.
A. Talk
B. Hold
C. **Transfer**
D. Night time
4. Everyone hates it when others check their _____________ during a meeting.
A. Watch
B. Screen
C. Mistakes
D. smartphones
5. The art of conversation lies in __________
A. Gossiping
B. Listening
C. Writing
D. Talking

5.8 REFERENCE

1. Business Etiquette in Brief: The Competitive Edge for Today's Professional Paperback – by Ann Marie Sabath (Author)
2. Emily Post's The Etiquette Advantage in Business 2e: Personal Skills for Professional Success Hardcover – by Peggy Post (Author), Peter Post (Author)
3. Business Etiquette: A Guide for The Indian Professional Paperback – by Shital Kakkar Mehra (Author)

UNIT 6- MEETING ETIQUETTE

STRUCTURE

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this , students will be able to

- Define the significance of meeting etiquette
- Understand the duties of chairperson and secretary
- Learn how to manage a formal meeting
- Explain strategies for conducting effective meetings.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Before we explore the meaning of meeting etiquette, let’s understand what ‘etiquette’ means. Etiquette refers to a complex network of unwritten rules that govern social interactions and behavior. It reflects our cultural norms, ethical codes and various social conventions. Respect, kindness and consideration are at the heart of good etiquette. We can master the rules of etiquette to build confidence, improve our social skills and progress professionally.

Meeting etiquette refers to the social conventions that govern the way we interact with others. It’s a highly sought-after social skill in workplaces because efficient business meetings positively impact the productivity and success of any organization. In short, meeting etiquette refers to the standard behavior expected during work meetings. It prompts you to behave professionally and respect others’ time and effort.

Golden Rules Of Meeting Etiquette

Here are a few helpful rules for you to follow that encourage proper etiquette in meetings:

Be Punctual

Always be on time. Arrive a few minutes early for meetings so that you have a buffer period. If you find yourself running late, apologize and sit down to avoid interrupting the flow of the meeting.

Come Prepared

Go prepared for your meetings. Many meeting organizers send a meeting agenda beforehand to help you prepare and gauge expectations. Follow the action items on the agenda and make sure you have everything ready on your part.

Dress Professionally

Although many modern organizations don’t enforce or mandate dress codes, you should wear appropriate attire for your meetings. Consult your manager or co-workers if you’re unsure.

Monitor Body Language

Pay attention to your body language. Whether you're presenting or attending a meeting, you must avoid creating any distractions. For example, tapping your feet repeatedly may be annoying for the speaker.

Be Loud Enough

Speak up so that you're audible to everyone. If you can't get your points across clearly, unnecessary conflicts may arise. Moreover, if you speak very softly, you may be misheard or you may not be able to get your point across.

Keep Your Space Clean

If you were eating, drinking tea or coffee or making notes during the meeting, make sure to clear up after yourself. Wait until after the meeting to throw everything into a dustbin. You don't want to distract the speaker by making sudden movements when the meeting is in progress.

Virtual Meeting Etiquette

Work from home has become the new normal and virtual meetings have become a part of our daily work routine. Here are a few tips for maintaining proper etiquette during online meetings:

Test Your Setup Before You Join A Meeting. Make Sure That Your Internet Connection, Mic And Camera Are Functioning Properly.

Mute Your Microphone When You're Not Speaking. It Ensures That There's No Echo And You Don't Disrupt The Flow Of Meetings.

It May Be Tempting To Check Your Phone But Try To Avoid It So That You Are Alert And Active At All Times. Participate In Discussions And Show Anyone Who's Speaking That You're Respectfully Listening To Them.

Importance Of Meeting Room Etiquette

Following proper meeting room etiquette ensures that the flow of your meeting(s) isn't interrupted. Here are some other advantages of good meeting etiquette:

Improves Communication

When you actively listen and respond to people, it shows that you're paying attention to them. They'll feel valued and are more likely to reciprocate by paying attention when you speak.

Increases Productivity

Meetings are more productive when people have an agenda to follow. They come prepared and steer the discussion based on their queries.

Improves Relationships

Meeting etiquette helps create good first impressions. When people feel confident about trusting you, it's easier to build mutually beneficial relationships.

6.2 MANAGING A MEETING

Meetings are essential for team work and getting things done. But done badly, they can feel like a waste of time and energy. Read on for six tips for successful meetings.

We've all been in badly managed meetings: meetings that seem to go round in circles without any decisions being made; meetings that are dominated by the same few voices; meetings where people talk and talk with no clear purpose; meetings that seem to go on forever ...

A European survey found that the typical staff member spends 187 hours a year in meetings. The report suggested that 56 per cent of those meetings were considered unproductive. In a survey of office workers across the UK, it was found that each employee cost their company an average of £38.50 for every meeting they attended.

So how can we have more efficient, effective and even inspiring meetings? Here are six tips.

1. Set a clear agenda.

An agenda is a list of points to be dealt with at the meeting, in the order in which they will be discussed. If you have a long list of bullet points, consider prioritising the items and breaking each topic down into its key issues.

Indicate on your agenda how much time you'll be spending on each topic, who will be presenting or leading it and whether a decision or some kind of solution will be needed. Also, remember to send out the agenda a few days before the meeting so that participants have time to prepare.

2. Review the attendee list.

When we are busy, the last thing we need is an invitation to a meeting we don't really need to attend. So, consider carefully who needs to be there. Invite someone to a meeting if:

- the points on the agenda are relevant and the decisions will affect them
- they have expertise to contribute
- they have the authority to make the decisions required.

3. Keep the meeting focused on the agenda.

Follow the agenda and politely redirect participants back to it if you find that they have gone off-topic. Introduce the idea of 'parking' ideas and discussions that are not strictly relevant or urgent. This gives you the chance to acknowledge ideas and issues that might be important to the participants but which are not a priority right now. You can then follow up by including 'parked' ideas in the meeting minutes and exploring them at a different time.

4. Encourage participation and be sensitive.

The most vocal participants might not be the ones with the best ideas. Give everyone a chance to speak and encourage participation from quieter colleagues. However, avoid putting anyone on the spot. Also, be sensitive to underlying issues and emotions and help the group deal with conflict in a productive way.

5. Clarify, check and record.

Don't assume that everyone understands each other, especially when the meeting language isn't everyone's first language.

Ask for clarification, summarise each time a point is made, check that the participants agree and ensure that decisions are made. Ask someone to take notes of what is being discussed and ensure that action points – tasks to be done and who will do them – are recorded in the minutes.

6. End the meeting on time.

Meetings that don't end on time can leave participants feeling tired, frustrated and stressed. So, assure your participants that the meeting will end on time and set the timer on your phone to ring about five to ten minutes before the end. Use the last five to ten minutes to summarise and bring the meeting to a close.

If we all make an effort to make every meeting we attend an efficient and effective one, meetings can help us communicate well and be part of a productive team.

6.3.1 Meeting agenda

There’s a good chance you’ve experienced that painful feeling that arises when you’re unsure why you’re in a meeting and don’t know what to expect. Meetings without agendas tend to cause that feeling—that’s why we believe meeting agendas should be an integral part of your meeting culture.

An effective agenda communicates the purpose of your meeting, gives your team the chance to prepare their agenda items, and keeps everyone on track.
Whether you're prepping for your next board meeting, staff meeting, or business meeting, we'll help you write an agenda that will maximize your meeting's potential.

Tips to create an effective meeting agenda

Let's start with some of our favorite tips on creating great meeting agendas so you can make the most of yours:
Create and share your meeting agenda as early as possible. At the very latest, you should share your meeting agenda an hour before the meeting time. This allows everyone to prepare for what's going to happen. Your team can also relay questions or additional agenda items to you for a potential adjustment before the meeting. Besides, when your team members have a chance to properly prepare themselves, they'll have a much easier time focusing during the meeting.

Link to any relevant pre-reading materials in advance. This can be the presentation deck, additional context, or a previous decision. Everyone arriving to the meeting will be on the same page and ready to move the discussion forward rather than asking a ton of questions that take up relevant time.
Assign facilitators for each agenda item. Remember that feeling of being called on in school when you didn't know the answer? It's a pretty terrible feeling that we're sure you don't want to evoke in your teammates. By assigning a facilitator for each agenda item before the meeting, you allow them to prepare for a quick rundown of the topic, questions, and feedback.
Define and prioritize your agenda items. Differentiate between the three categories of agenda items: informational, discussion topics, and action items. Clarifying the purpose of each agenda item helps your team member understand what's most important and what to focus on. You'll also want to prioritize which items are most important and absolutely have to be discussed during the meeting and which ones can be addressed asynchronously, should the clock run out.
Use your meeting agenda during the meeting to track notes and action items. That way, all of the meeting information is in one place. If anyone has questions about decisions or action items from the meeting, they have an easy place to find it. Bonus: Do this in Asana so you can assign out action items and next steps to ensure nothing falls through the cracks. Asana also integrates with Zoom and pulls in your Zoom recording or meeting transcript directly into the meeting agenda task.
Create flow by categorizing your agenda items. To maximize productivity, you'll want to create a meeting agenda that flows well. Batch similar items together and ensure they can build off of one another. For example, list any informational items before the discussion items so your team has all of the information going into the discussion.
Allocate enough time for each item on your agenda. Nobody will complain about a meeting that runs short—keeping everyone longer than anticipated isn't as much fun. Plan sufficient time for each agenda item by calculating an estimated time and adding a couple of minutes as a buffer. This will help with keeping your team on track and moving on from a topic when the time runs out.
By sticking to these best practices, you can ensure that your meeting agenda is a reliable tool and does the job—before, during, and after your meeting.

Why are meeting agendas important?

Whether you work from home and take virtual calls or sit in the office and meet in person, meetings can be incredibly draining. Beginning with some small talk may be nice to get to know each other better or catch up on what everyone did this past weekend but it certainly isn't goal-oriented or productive. A meeting agenda can help your team maximize the potential of each meeting you hold.

Our research shows that unnecessary meetings accounted for 157 hours of "work" in 2020, compared to 103 in 2019. Considering a 40-hour work week, that's almost four weeks of wasted time. This is where your meeting agenda comes in. If you're doing it right, writing your meeting agenda is the first and best indicator of whether or not your meeting is actually necessary. If you find that everything on your meeting agenda can be discussed asynchronously, you can cancel the meeting and share your message in a time-saving email.

That isn't to say all meetings should be replaced by emails. If you're sure that the meeting is justified and necessary in order to drive your team's progress, have that meeting. However, always make sure that you create an agenda before getting together so your team members know what you'll be discussing and why the meeting matters.

Here are a few more great reasons to have meeting agendas:

Your agenda allows everyone to prepare for the meeting. Ideally, every item on your agenda will have a dedicated topic facilitator. When everyone going into the meeting knows what their responsibilities are in advance, they have time to prepare and will be more efficient during the meeting.

It shows you're considerate of your team's time. When your team receives a well-thought-out meeting agenda, they'll immediately see that the meeting is actually necessary. Besides, it's also a roadmap that will keep you on track during the meeting and ensure no time is wasted.

An agenda sets clear expectations of what will and won't be discussed. Think of a meeting agenda as a way of setting boundaries and ensuring that only topics on the agenda will be talked about. If anything comes up during the meeting that needs to be discussed, write it down in your minutes and return to it later. Either at the end of your meeting—if you got through it faster than expected—asynchronously, or in the next meeting.

It keeps your team on track. Your meeting agenda will prevent your team from drifting off—whether that's discussing non-agenda topics (like the barbecue at Kat's place last night) or taking too much time for an item that had specific time allocated.

Your agenda will provide purpose, structure, and opportunities to collaborate. With a clear plan for everyone to follow, your team will go into the meeting knowing the purpose and goal of the meeting. Your meeting agenda also allows your team to direct their attention toward opportunities to collaborate, whether that's during a brainstorming session, a town hall, or your daily standup.

Track next steps and action items so nothing falls through the cracks. Keep your agenda open during the meeting to capture any next steps or action items. By adding them directly into the agenda, these items won't be forgotten when the meeting ends.

Meetings are great opportunities for your team to bond but the time spent on small talk can be worked into the first few minutes of the agenda rather than surfacing every now and then during the meeting, disrupting the flow and productivity or your team's discussion.

Read: 5 tips for leading great meetings

What goes into a good meeting agenda?

Now you know why meeting agendas are important, but how do you create an agenda that ticks off all of these boxes?

Let's take a look at what a good meeting agenda should always contain:

The purpose of the meeting: Your meeting agenda should inform all participants what the meeting objectives are, what will be discussed, and what kinds of decisions need to be made. Your agenda should include just enough context so that your team can familiarize themselves with the topic before the meeting begins.
The meeting participants: Not only should your agenda list the participants of the meeting but also what agenda items each team member will be responsible for.

The duration and the allocated time for each agenda item: Defining how much time will be spent on each agenda item can be difficult when you're first starting out writing agendas. Once you get the hang of it, though, you'll realize how rewarding it is. It's always good to allocate a couple more minutes than you think you'll need, in case a question or discussion point arises that needs to be resolved during your meeting.
An overview that lists what will be discussed during the meeting: Your meeting agenda should contain a full list of items that will be discussed during the meeting to ensure that everyone is on the same page. These can be topics to brainstorm, decision-making items, or open-ended questions. Listing all of the items for the meeting sets boundaries and allows your team to prepare for each agenda item.
We have now defined the bones of your meeting agenda but there are a few more things that can truly level up the way you write meeting agendas and use them as an extension of your meeting culture.
Read: Why 1:1 meetings are crucial to your team's success

Running an effective meeting

It's one thing to have an amazingly organized and detailed agenda that your team can reference before the meeting—using it as a tool during the meeting is a whole other ballpark. These tips will help you make your meeting agenda as useful during the meeting as it is as a preparation tool:
Stick to your agenda. The best agenda becomes useless if you don't stick to it during the meeting. Try not to bounce back and forth between agenda items but rather stick to the priorities you established earlier.
Stick to your time-boxes. It absolutely helps release some tension and lighten the mood if you have a bit of small talk or a quick check-in at the beginning of your meeting. That's why you should allocate three to five minutes to this—and stick to the time-frame. Pictures of Kabir's son's adorable Halloween costume can be shared elsewhere so you, have enough time to reach your meeting's goals now.
Designate a note taker. At the beginning of the meeting, designate a note taker who will write down any questions, feedback, tasks, and ideas that come up during the meeting. You can rotate this position so everyone on your team gets to contribute at some point.
Ideally, these notes are taken in the same place as the meeting agenda—this will make it a lot easier for team members to follow the notes and link them to agenda items.
Follow up after the meeting. Typically, the note taker will be responsible for following up with the meeting notes afterward. The notes should include any decisions that were made during the meeting, tasks that need to be completed, and questions that remained unanswered. If possible, assign teammates and add due dates to action items to keep accountability high.

6.3.2 Minute taking

Minute taking can be a challenging task. It gets even more complicated if you are expected to be an active participant at the meeting as well. Not only are you required to keep track of what everyone is saying, but you are also required to record the discussions and decisions accurately.
For some meetings, impartial minute taking may be advisable either by an internal person not

involved in the meeting or by an external professional minute taker so that their full focus is on recording the discussions, agreements, actions and outcomes of the meeting.

An impartial minute taker that has no direct link to the subject matter or person(s) involved in the meeting can provide peace of mind and a level of comfort to all involved. It enables all attendees to concentrate on the meeting at hand, which will support an open environment for discussion.

Minute taking is a key administrative role and a hugely important undertaking. As minutes are often a legal representation of what happened in a meeting, they should be easily accessible to refer back to and to prove that the meeting adhered to proper processes.

However, minutes are not simply a transcript of absolutely everything that was said during the meeting, but rather a document containing:

- A summary of all the main points that meeting attendees discussed and who said what.
- Any actions and agreements they came to.
- When actions will be completed – timescales and deadlines.
- Who is accountable for carrying out these actions.

To be effective, the minute taker must:

- Document an accurate record of what took place.
- Create a concise document, avoiding irrelevances and repetition.
- Create a balanced document that accurately reflects the discussion.
- Ensure that the minutes are provided in a way that makes them easy to read and makes sense to people who are not at the meeting.

How to take effective minutes

Before you start taking notes, it is important to understand the type of information you need to record at the meeting and the depth of coverage required. You should have clarified this with the meeting organiser/Chair prior to the meeting.

Effective minute takers use a template such as the one included in Unit 2, based on the agenda. This makes it easy for you to simply jot down notes, decisions, etc. under each item as you go along. If you are taking notes by hand, consider including space below each item on your outline for your handwritten notes, then print it out and use it to capture minutes.

Minute notes usually include the following:

Date, time and venue of the meeting.

Names of attendees (include job titles if required) and those who are unable and/or fail to attend.

Announcements such as acceptance or corrections/amendments to previous meeting minutes.

Decisions made about each agenda item, for example:

– Actions taken or agreed to be taken

– Next steps

– Motions taken or rejected

– Voting outcomes – e.g., details of who made motions; who seconded and approved

– Items to be held over.

Any other business.

Next meeting date and time.

Documents to be included with the minutes.

There are certain details you should always include in your meeting notes so that you can accurately write up the minutes of the meeting.

These are:

Type of meeting – For example, Boards can hold several types of meetings, including regular, special, called, emergency – it's important to include which type of meeting the minutes cover.

Organisation name – Although this might sound obvious, your minutes should include the official name of the organising body.

Date and time – The meeting time you record in the minutes is the time the meeting is called to order. If the meeting was scheduled for 10:00, and for some reason it started at 10:30, the minutes should indicate 10:30 as the start time.

Location – The location should be included unless the organisation meets at the same place every time. If this is the case, only include the location in the minutes of the first meeting of the financial year.

Why is it important?

There are many reasons why it is important to take minutes of meetings. We have already seen that from a legal perspective, meeting minutes give an organisation protection by recording why decisions were made.

Other reasons why taking minutes of meetings is important include:

They help to drive action points – When you create the minutes of a meeting, you should be clear about the decisions made, but also about the next steps required to put them into action. Minutes are an opportunity to clearly state what must happen, when the deadline is and who is responsible for that action. This acts as a reminder to meeting attendees of their duties and holds them accountable going forward.

They help to measure progress – Because you have action points in the minutes, the attendees can easily see the success or otherwise of the decisions they make. All attendees should read the minutes before the next meeting in order to be able to approve them, and this acts as an instant reminder of what has or hasn't been achieved in the interim.

They provide accountability for decisions – There is the potential for those not in the meeting to see it as one harmonised decision-making group. But the reality is that attendees at meetings do not always agree. Minutes show who voted for and against the various motions, which means attendees have to take ownership of their decisions. This means that they should think very carefully before casting votes, which can only benefit the organisation. In case of conflicts, minutes are useful to know what agreements were made and by who.

They are the starting point of any following meetings – Attendees can go over the previous meeting minutes to remind every participant of what happened, what topics they discussed, and the decisions they made. This is particularly useful for people who did not attend the previous meeting; everyone who missed or who was not invited to the previous meeting can be updated on what happened and be informed on what they missed.

The role of the minute taker

A minute taker is an attendee at a meeting whose role is to record the minutes of the meeting. Anybody can take some form of notes from a meeting; however, it takes skill and practice to take quality meeting minutes. A minute taker is an essential component in an effective meeting process. They must listen attentively to the proceedings to avoid losing anything important.

It is also their responsibility to give an impartial record of the meeting.

The minute taker often begins by preparing the meeting room and seating arrangements, preparing and arranging the equipment and paper, and, more importantly, liaising with the Chair and attendees. If the meeting is online, the minute taker may test the technology prior to the meeting. The role of a minute taker at meetings is therefore administrative. They put in place preparations aimed at making the meeting a success and then record the proceedings to be shared with the attendees later on.

Both the Chair and the attendees rely on the minute taker for the success of a meeting. Other duties may include performing critical tasks given by the Chair such as helping with keeping to time on agenda items and maintaining order in certain types of meetings.

A minute taker requires certain qualities. Not everyone is naturally good at taking meeting minutes. However, anyone can acquire the skill through training, personal development and practice. There are some basic skills that every good minute taker must have.

These are:

Listening skills

The ability to listen, absorb and record what is being said is crucial. Active listening requires a great deal of concentration and focus and is vital for recording accurate notes. To improve your listening skills by paraphrasing, try this simple exercise:

– Listen to a news item for about 5 minutes, then paraphrase it in writing. Because we have rolling news, the item will be repeated so when it is, check your paraphrased notes with the reporter's version. Were you able to make sense of the reporter's points and demonstrate that you were listening closely by the notes that you have taken?

Keep practising – Paraphrasing and summarising are both fantastic communication skills that can help you to take accurate minutes.

Assertiveness

You must have the confidence to speak up where and when appropriate, for example when seeking clarification of a point being made. As the minute taker you have the right to ask for clarification at any point. Ask questions such as:

– Please can you briefly introduce yourselves (this is important so that you can make a visual map of the table as attendees are being introduced).

– Could you give me a precise action for the minutes?

– Who is responsible for that?

– Could you define the action for the minutes?

– What is the deadline for that action?

Being more assertive, you can become a stronger and more confident communicator.

Organisation skills

You must be well organised. For example, you will need to read the agenda beforehand, potentially hold a pre-meeting meeting with the Chair, go through previous minutes and background papers, and arrange for the provision of any devices and materials that will be needed in the meeting. Top tips for improving your organisational skills include:

– Creating a to-do list.

– Prioritising each task.

– Inputting tasks into a schedule.

– Establishing the necessary steps to achieve the tasks.

– Ticking them off when completed.

Knowledgeable

It is easier to document the discussions if you know what the attendees are talking about. You should have some knowledge on the subject(s) being discussed either through formal training or by doing some research prior to the meeting.

Before the meeting if you spot something worrying you on the agenda, speak to the Chair or the person who has put the agenda item on. It is always useful to ask for a pre-meeting with the Chair to go through the papers.

Good written English

The real work is not in documenting the proceedings clearly, but effectively communicating the outcomes and salient points after the meeting is over. You must be able to produce a document that is of the appropriate quality for the meeting attendees. One of the major criticisms of writing in business is the use of inappropriate words or phrases and punctuation errors. The criticism falls into five main areas:

– Using a long word when a shorter one will do.

– Using words or phrases which people wouldn't use in normal conversation.

– Using words unfamiliar to the reader.

– Using jargon and acronyms.

– Bad punctuation.

Critical thinker

Critical thinking helps you sift through the data to know what is noteworthy and what should be left out. Look at the following example of a report on the success of an installation in reception made at a meeting:"The goldfish have been a great success in the reception area; many people commented that they were relaxing. It seemed to stop small children running around – they were more interested in watching the fish". The minute taker summarised by noting "Goldfish in reception – a good thing"Also, long wordy notes which do not highlight the salient points are of little value unless a transcription of the entire meeting is required. The following are some words and phrases often found in business writing. What reader-friendly words could you replace them with?

– Additionally.
– Commence.
– During the time that.
– Facilitate.
– In the event that.
– Regarding.
– The manner in which.
– Appertaining to.
– Assistance.
– Due to the fact that.
– Endeavour.
– In order that.
– Parameters.
– Terminate.
– The writer.
– With reference to.

What needs to be recorded

Effective meeting minutes are all about understanding what is important to include and what does not need to be recorded.

You don't need to write a transcript of the meeting – recording it all would be impossible and unnecessary. The amount of information that the minute taker includes in the minutes is often known as the "depth of coverage", and will vary depending on their intended use.

Depending on the purpose, the right choice for minutes can vary from a very concise outline to a more detailed summary. The depth of coverage should always be agreed with the Chair in advance.

It is important to write your meeting minutes objectively, avoiding using adjectives such as "there was a **lively** discussion" and adverbs such as "the manager spoke **softly**" where you can, to prevent bias as much as possible.

It is important to capture the principal points of the meeting, including details such as:

- **Meeting details –** Meeting details include the meeting subject, location, date and start and end time. Also included is the name of the person who organised the meeting and the meeting agenda.
- **Meeting attendance –** Invitees in attendance, attendees who were not invited but who attended and any apologies from non-attendees.
- **Copies –** List the names of all individuals and departments that should receive a copy of the minutes.
- **Minutes of the last meeting –** This is a note of whether these minutes were agreed or amended.
- **Business or matters arising –** Details of any matters arising from the last meeting.
- **Meeting notes –** Use the agenda as a guide; this agenda will show you what is planned to be discussed during the meeting. Use the meeting agenda as an outline for your note taking, with each agenda item as a sub-topic where you can add more specific notes.
- **Meeting decisions –** Notes on what was decided, by who, anything undecided and next steps on decisions.
- **Meeting actions –** Any actions are noted with the person's initials responsible for the action and the completion due date.

- **Any other business –** Notes of anything discussed and/or decided that was not on the agenda.
- **Date and time of next meeting –** Note when the next meeting is scheduled for.

6.3 DUTIES OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND SECRETARY

The Role of the Chairperson

In a more formal meeting, the chairperson will outline the purpose of the meeting and remind members why they are there. In such a meeting there is little need to refer to this procedure as this is implicit in the established etiquette, namely:

- The chair controls the meeting.
- All remarks are addressed through the chair.
- Members do not interrupt each other.
- Members aim to reach a consensus.
- A vote is taken if consensus is not reached.
- The majority wins the vote.
- All members accept the majority decision.

This is one model but alternative models may be adopted.

When discussion is underway, it is the chairperson's responsibility to ensure that it continues to flow smoothly by involving all members present and by not permitting one or two people to dominate the meeting. Summarising by the chairperson during meetings can:

- Indicate progress, or lack of.
- Refocus discussion that has wandered off the point.
- Conclude one point and lead into the next.
- Highlight important points.
- Assist the **secretary** if necessary.
- Clarify any misunderstanding.

The chairperson should pace the meeting, ensuring it runs to time. If the planning has been properly executed, this should not prove to be a problem.

At the end of a meeting, the chairperson should remind members what they have achieved and thank them for their contributions. Finally, the time and date of the next meeting should be arranged. Again this is one common model for effective meetings, successful outcomes can be achieved in different ways with different strategies for different purposes, so adapt as appropriate to specific situations.

The Role of the Members

While it is the role of the chairperson to run the meeting, the participation of all members is also fundamental to the success of the meeting.

- To ensure an effective meeting, all participants should:
- Undertake any necessary preparation prior to the meeting.
- Arrive on time.
- Keep an open mind.
- Listen to the opinions of others.
- Participate.
- Avoid dominating the proceedings.
- Avoid conflict situations.
- Avoid side conversations which distract others.
- Ask questions to clarify understanding.
- Note down any action agreed upon.

- After the meeting, undertake any agreed action and brief others as appropriate.

The Secretary's Responsibility

The secretary's role in any formal group is to be guardian of the process of meetings. They are usually the person who makes the arrangements for the meetings, including AGMs, and keeps formal records of the group's process and decisions: the minutes of the meeting. This may include keeping records of correspondence.

This page focuses largely on the formal aspects of the secretary's role and particularly that relating to meetings.

Preparation: Before the Meeting

There are a number of things that the secretary needs to know before a meeting, most of which can easily be found out by asking the person due to chair the meeting.

The most important are:

- Who is expected to make the arrangements for the meeting, including finding a venue and arranging for suitable refreshments and any AV facilities? This is often the secretary.
- Who is responsible for preparing the agenda? Each chair will have their own preference, but this is also usually a secretarial responsibility, working with the chair. There may be other people who have a right to add items to the agenda.
- The secretary has a role in making sure that the agenda is not overloaded, which may include discussing with the chair and others what could be postponed to a later meeting, and what could be covered in a written report.
- What type of notes or minutes are required? Do they need to be formal minutes that set out who said what, or brief notes that record the agreed actions?
- How quickly do notes or minutes need to be produced and circulated after the meeting?
- What is the process for clearing the notes for publication? Some chairs like to approve minutes before they are sent further, while others prefer them to be circulated to several key attendees at the same time.

If you are new to your role as secretary, it is also worth finding out who is expected to attend, the organisations that they represent, and some of the issues which have been raised at previous meetings.

This will help you understand what's going on. You can do this by looking at past minutes of meetings, and also asking the chair what is likely to be discussed.

The secretary is responsible for sending out the papers for the meeting. This will include, but is not limited to, the agenda, the minutes of the last meeting, and any papers for discussion or information.

On the Day of the Meeting

On the day of the meeting, there are several things that the secretary will need to do:

- Make sure that you know who is expected to attend the meeting. If the building has security guards, you may need to provide a list of attendees.
- Get to the venue early and check that everything is OK. If you're responsible for the meeting arrangements, make sure that everything is there, the room is laid out correctly, any AV equipment is working, there are enough chairs, and any refreshments have arrived.
- You may want to give some thought to who sits where, and even mark our a seating plan, as this makes a huge difference to the way that the meeting runs. You should ensure that the chair is sitting centrally and that you are seated next to them.
- Make sure you have plenty of spare copies of papers for those who haven't brought a

copy. If there are a lot of papers it may be appropriate to arrange them in a folder using page/section numbers so that participants can easily find papers related to the current discussion.

- If you are using name badges, set them out in alphabetical order on a table by the door, where attendees can pick them up as they arrive.

Taking the Minutes of a Meeting

Welcome and Introductions

The minutes will need to include a full list of those present, and all who sent apologies.

To save you scribbling frantically as people introduce themselves around the table, circulate a sign-up sheet asking people to give their names, organisations and contact details. Note down any apologies for absence provided during introductions: people often introduce themselves as "So-and-so's replacement and, by the way, he/she sends their apologies".

The Main Business

How you take notes in the meeting depends on how formal the minutes need to be.

If you are only reporting a brief summary of the discussion, plus any action points, then you can afford to listen to the discussion and then summarise it in note form.

If, however, you are expected to write down the main points made by individual speakers, then you will need to make a fuller set of notes, including the speakers' names or initials.

It's a matter of choice whether you use a laptop or pen and paper to make notes, although it's as well to check with the chair in advance especially in a paid role.

Handy Hints for Minute Writing

Develop your own shorthand for key words or phrases or jargon in your field so that you can just use initials for common phrases.

Use initials to identify speakers in your notes. If you're not sure of the name, use the organisation: nobody will object to being identified as 'Representatives from x organisation', but unattributed views could get you into trouble.

If several people make the same point, just add 'X & Y agreed'.

Supporting the Process

It is the job of the chair to manage the process of the meeting, but there are several things that the secretary can do to help.

These include:

- ✓ Quietly pass a note to the chair highlighting any issues with the timing of the agenda, or slippage, or when coffee is due to arrive.
- ✓ Recap and summarise the discussion. This is particularly helpful when people are starting to make the same points again.
- ✓ Ask for clarification of a particular point if you don't understand it. The chances are that if you don't, others won't either and, anyway, you need to understand it to minute it correctly.
- ✓ Once an action has been agreed, check who is going to undertake it. It is not uncommon for a meeting to agree that action is necessary, and what that action is, without assigning who is responsible for it. You, as secretary, can ensure that this does not happen.
- ✓ Depending on the type of organisation, whether you are at a fairly junior level, or the role is voluntary and you're an elected member of a committee, it's probably best to discuss these responsibilities with the chair in advance to make sure that your intervention will be welcomed.
- ✓ It's easy to get distracted by an interesting discussion and forget to write anything

down. Try to remain focused on your task at all times, even when the discussion is going around in circles. The chair may call on you to recap at any moment.

After the Meeting

Now the work really starts!

It's best to start writing minutes as soon as possible after the meeting. However transparent your notes seemed in the meeting, they won't be nearly as clear 24 hours later, and if you leave them for two weeks you will wonder whether that was actually you in the meeting.

Minutes should follow the order of the agenda. Even if someone revisited a particular topic later on in the meeting, you should include that discussion under the original agenda item. Make sure that you include all the key points made in discussion, any decisions made and actions agreed, together with who is responsible for actions.

Minutes are almost always written in the past tense, and usually in the passive voice ("X set out that y needed to happen; it was agreed that Z would be responsible"). Use 'would' rather than 'will' for what is going to happen, especially with formal minutes.

It is a matter of style whether you use first names, titles plus surnames, or initials to refer to those speaking.

Check with the chair, or look at past minutes to see what has been done before, and use the same approach consistently.

Checking and Approving

If you're new to minute writing, it may be advisable to send the minutes to one or two trusted people to check and comment on before you circulate them more widely.

One of these people should probably be the chair, unless they themselves have asked you to send them to someone else first. Once the minutes have been approved by the chair, they can be circulated more widely to the attendees and, if necessary, published on a website. Be aware that attendees may wish to correct any errors, and corrections will need to be incorporated in the next set of minutes.

6.4 EFFECTIVE MEETING STRATEGIES

Everyone agrees that meetings are essential, but everyone also agrees that meetings can be a time-suck. It's important to get people face to face to discuss pressing issues, projects, and plans, but sometimes people spend so much time in meetings that they can't get their work done. It's one thing to learn how to conduct a business meeting your employees won't hate, but it's just as important to hold a meeting that is both efficient and effective.

In a startup, where staff is limited and time is of the essence, it's important to make meetings as efficient as possible. Here are 7 tips for ensuring that your meetings are worth their time.

Effective Meeting Strategies

1. Plan meeting agendas carefully

The most effect meeting strategies focus on careful planning and creating detailed agendas. It's important that meetings use the valuable time of each participant efficiently. Not only employees, but if your meeting involves vendors or consultants, their time is billed by the hour, so it's best to not waste any of it.

The best way to make meetings efficient is to carefully plan a detailed agenda, and distribute it, in advance, to all attendees. Include details of who is attending and what is to be discussed, and stick to the agenda; but don't hesitate to veer off a bit if something comes up that is tangentially related to the issues at hand. Sometimes, meetings uncover problems or issues that no one had planned to discuss.

2. Do you really need those weekly meetings?

Many startups find "trimming the fat" and cutting out any unnecessary meetings is one of the most effective meeting strategies to implement early on, because it forces attendees to communicate more in less time. Many teams hold weekly meetings, often on Monday morning, when people may be groggy and not quite prepared to do their best work. While this is a great thing to do for a small team in a startup, weekly project team meetings may be very inefficient. Not everyone will necessarily have anything to say, and you may go around the table with each person giving a status update similar to that of the previous week, in part because they haven't had time to check in with others to see what has been accomplished. Think about how useful these weekly meetings are and either cut them back, or don't include everyone on a team in each meeting, if their input isn't needed.

3. Watch the clock

When it comes to implementing effective meeting strategies in the workplace, nothing is more counterproductive than wasting time. Set firm times to begin your meetings, and ensure that all attendees are at least five minutes early. That will give them a few minutes they need for small talk, which is essential for social bonding. But start on time, keep the meeting's pace on track, and end on time. If you plan a one-hour meeting, end in one hour; don't drag on. But if there are issues that need more time, plan for them separately; most likely, not all the meeting's participants are needed to discuss all issues.

4. Hold stand-up meetings

Another useful strategy for ensuring meetings remain effective and efficient includes implementing stand-up meetings whenever appropriate. There are some meetings that are essential and that can take a lot of time, but for many meetings, it's just a matter of checking in and keeping key team members up to date on projects. Consider holding shorter stand-up meetings.

People are more likely to get to the point, and it gets them on their feet, which might be a good thing, as many people sit too much. However, some people may not be comfortable standing for a long time, so keep these meetings short. One downside is that it's harder to take notes, so stand-up meetings are best for short updates rather than project planning.

5. Find the right time for meetings

One often overlooked yet highly effective strategy for keeping meetings efficient requires simply being aware of when during the day is the most appropriate time to hold a specific meeting. There are a number of factors that play a role in making this determination, but different meetings should be held at different times. Some short meetings are best in the morning, so people can take action on items discussed in the meeting during the day. And at that time, people are still buzzed on their morning caffeine, so they may be more talkative. One the other hand, having meetings after lunch may not be the best time. People become naturally lethargic as they digest their meals, and they may be less expansive and less inspired. Late in the day may not be very good either, as people are tired, especially if some of them have been traveling and are jet-lagged. Check with your team and try to find the times that they prefer so everyone is at their best.

6. Have someone take notes and circulate minutes

This may seem obvious, but meeting minutes are important and ensuring someone is taking notes is a crucial element of the most effective meeting strategies. Important decisions are made at meetings, and it's essential that everyone at the meeting – and their own teams – is on the same page. Instead of each person taking their own notes, which generally only concern their responsibility, have one person take detailed notes and circulate minutes. This ensures that no one has misinterpreted what was said at meetings, and that there is a record of which important action items were decided.

7. Ventilate the meeting room

It's not something people often consider when thinking about strategizing how to keep meetings as effective and efficient as possible, but it should make sense that proper airflow can make a real difference. When people are in a closed meeting room, they need clean air.

A study carried out at Harvard University shows that after two hours in a meeting room, CO_2 levels are such that people's cognitive abilities decline and their decision-making abilities are compromised. Make sure that there is good ventilation, and, if possible, open windows. It can be interesting to install a small CO_2 detector in meeting rooms and see how high it gets; above 1000 ppm, it's time to get some air.

6.5.1 Preparing for the meeting

You're anxious to get your meeting underway, and we don't blame you. There's likely a lot to discuss, customer stories to share, and business strategies to agree to. But before you dive in, make sure you do these nine steps to ensure the meeting is as productive as possible.

- Create a meeting template
- Ask attendees to contribute
- Attach or embed supporting documents
- Give people time to prepare
- Practice what you're going to say
- Decide if other people are presenting
- Define meeting roles
- Note any action items
- Encourage attendees to have cameras on

1 Create a meeting template

First things first — start by creating a meeting template. Doing so gives your meeting structure, allowing for the conversation to stay focused and on topic.

The agenda will start with the time and location (if you're meeting in person), followed by the purpose of the meeting. It should include information like a list of topics, talking points, action items, and other activities that attendees will discuss.

Providing a clear and comprehensive outline of what will occur when the meeting takes place is crucial to the meeting's success, as everyone knows what is expected of them, what questions or customer stories they should have ready to share, and what their role will be as it unfolds.

2 Ask attendees to contribute to the agenda

What can turn a good agenda into a great agenda? Asking for attendees to contribute and add their own agenda items.

Maybe an attendee has a specific bottleneck or challenge they need help overcoming, an update on a milestone the team is working to achieve, or any significant changes to company policy. Ensuring that the meeting agenda is collaborative and easy to share with attendees ensures that nothing falls through the cracks and all action items are discussed.

It can also give attendees a heads up for questions being asked and challenges being discussed, allowing them to think about some of these bottlenecks in advance so that maybe they can come to the meeting with a solution or idea ready to share.

3 Attach or embed supporting documents and graphs

As you create an agenda, you'll have a better idea of what documents and files the meeting attendees will need to go over to be up to speed on any relevant topics. It'll also help you to create a winning PowerPoint or Slide Deck that is engaging and informative.

It's important that you give meeting attendees enough time to ensure everyone has a chance to look over important information and metrics. So, if there's any material you want them reviewing ahead of time, be sure to send it out at least 24 hours ahead of time. Express to the attendees that you'd like them to have a look at these materials in advance.

After all, there's nothing worse than surprising your team with 50 slides when the meeting starts. Knowing what they're about to walk into sets the meeting up for success.

4 Give people time to prepare comments and questions

Similarly, attaching these materials gives your team enough time to prepare comments, concerns, questions, and stories. If you don't, you're going to have a meeting where no one is prepared, with conversation that is all over the place, and that will likely need another meeting to handle the objectives.

The more time your team has to prepare these comments and questions ahead of time, the better the conversation will be in the meeting! It also ensures that everyone stays engaged and on topic so that nothing falls through the cracks.

5 If you're presenting, practice what you're going to say

All great presentations take a little practice.

So, if you're the meeting host, or the one kicking things off, be sure to practice what you're going to say before all eyes are on you! No matter if you're presenting slides, leading the entire conversation, or simply bringing a few questions or talking points to the floor, practice what you're going to say at least once. You may consider running through different ways to start the meeting or the conversation, whether with an icebreaker or story-share.

You can also write key points down on a piece of paper to bring with you to the meeting room or have a document pulled up electronically for you to read off of. No matter the method you choose, this will ensure that your point comes across as clearly and concisely as possible, and you minimize the amount of rambling as you speak.

And, if you plan on simply reading off slides, don't read them verbatim, but instead, switch it up and add some additional commentary so you don't bore the other attendees.

6 Decide if other people are presenting (and let them know in advance)

The same can be said for other meeting attendees. If they are presenting off the slides, let them know beforehand which slides are up to them to deliver. Also, give them the ability to make their own slides or presentation materials to create the content in their own voice and add some personal flair. Additionally, remember that presenting doesn't come naturally for everyone, so providing others with enough time to prepare can help ease their nerves and feel more comfortable speaking in front of other attendees.

You should also consider that it's always best to have more than one person reading off the presentation or switching up the voice of the person speaking in general. Only giving one person the chance to present can make the meeting feel like a one-sided conversation. It makes it feel boring, too.

7 Define meeting roles such as note-taker and time-keeper

No one likes to have a meeting role sprung on them last minute, so figure out ahead of time who will be taking the meeting notes, the minutes, and who will be the time-keeper.

For example, if someone on your team is great at being punctual, assign them to be the time-keeper, whose role it is to verify that the meeting begins and ends on time and that all items on the agenda are discussed accordingly. Whereas the note keeper should be organized, as they record the key decisions and details made during the meeting. It's also up to them to send out the notes to the attendees once the meeting has come to a close.

Remind this person that notes should be sent out within 24 hours after the meeting, so everything stays top of mind.

8 Note any action items and key takeaways

It can be helpful to use meeting software that does some of the heavy lifting for you — like providing a place to write down key takeaways from the conversations and action items for what needs to be followed up on.

For instance, a meeting tool like Fellow makes it easy to keep track of action items with a section already available. This way, all relevant and need-to-know information is organized in one place. You never know when the perfect idea will be brought up, so you want to be ready with a place to write it down.

9 If remote, encourage attendees to have cameras on

It can be tricky to hold a productive virtual meeting, but one way to ensure that everyone is engaged, listening, and a part of the conversation is to ask that everyone turns their camera on. Be sure to set this rule in motion ahead of time, so no one is caught off guard looking less-than camera-ready. Seeing your team while they're speaking and knowing that others are paying attention while you speak makes the meeting more personal.

You can also encourage attendees to make sure they're sitting in a quiet place away from distractions and mute incoming notifications, so their attention remains on the conversation.

6.5.2 Conducting the meeting

A lousy meeting can waste time and put all the meeting attendees in a bad mood. 67% of workers say that a bad meeting distracts them from getting on with their jobs.

To avoid this sentiment and run an effective meeting, you're going to want to follow five steps. Each of these addresses a different aspect of the process, helping everything run smoothly when the meeting starts.

You should include the following aspects or rules in your meetings:

- Set a meeting agenda before the meeting
- Know what type of meeting it is
- Start and end on time
- End with an action plan
- Take notes

Let's break each of these steps down, discussing why they help create more effective meetings.

Set a meeting agenda

Meetings live and die by their agendas. Not only does an agenda inform everyone before they arrive exactly why the meeting is happening, allowing them to prepare and know what to expect, but it also gives you a roadmap to follow during the meeting.

As soon as the meeting starts, you don't want to waste time establishing what you want to talk about, as it should all already be down on the agenda. After a short introduction, you'll be able to launch straight into the meat of the meeting.

Writing an agenda beforehand also allows you to establish, both for yourself and for your team, if the meeting is essential. You don't want to flood your team's schedule with meeting after meeting, so a clear agenda will demonstrate to them that you've thought about the reasons for calling the meeting and have a specific purpose for the meeting.

Establish the type of meeting

Not all meetings follow the same format, meaning that establishing the type of meeting beforehand (and noting it in the agenda) ensures everyone knows what they're getting into.

Is the meeting specifically to brainstorm ideas? Maybe it's about decision-making and action plans going forward on a project? It could even just be one of many regular meetings your team has each week to catch up on how everyone is progressing.

Pay attention to the different types of meetings there are, and make sure that your employees know which type they will be attending. Once they get to the conference room or video call, you should be able to get into a group discussion as quickly as possible.

Start and end on time

The end of meetings, no matter how good they may seem, will be derailed if you run over time. In every workplace, people are busy and need to stay on track. Due to this, punctuality is appreciated by all the participants involved.

Be sure to start your meeting when you say, don't wait around for latecomers to arrive. Similarly, the session ends when you said it would.

Be very cautious about exceptions to these rules. Stick to your timings, and you'll keep everything running smoothly.

End with an action plan

If you want to run effective meetings that ensure things get done, then ensure you have your final agenda item as setting a firm action plan. This plan will allow your team to consolidate what they've talked about quickly and now take action on the next steps.

Talk about what will come next in the process and how the ideas you've discussed will transform into affirmative actions. Be sure that all your attendees come away with a clear vision of where they need to go now with the project you've discussed.

Take notes

One of the most overlooked aspects of effective meetings is generating a set of notes that participants can look back on. Although this may seem like many small tasks that don't make a difference, taking notes can significantly enrich your meetings.

Effective meetings will have one or many designated note-takers. Those that can type quickly are fantastic for this, jotting down the main ideas of the conversation at the same time as listening and participating.

While the notes don't have to be as detailed as meeting minutes that break down who said what at every moment, it's a good idea to write down the main ideas of what was discussed by the group.

6.5.3 Evaluating the meeting

People familiar with continuous improvement principles know that the last step in any activity should be an evaluation of performance. Meetings are no different.

Use the last couple minutes during a meeting to evaluate the group's performance. People will have opinions about whether they thought the meeting was successful or not. They won't be shy about sharing them to co-workers, especially if they thought the meeting stunk. The trick is to capture these opinions and apply the lessons learned to future meetings.

Meeting evaluation questions

What are you trying to learn during an evaluation? Here the some of the basic questions the evaluation should address:

- Was the meeting well-planned?

- Did we achieve the planned objectives?
- Were the right people involved in the meeting?
- Did people come prepared?
- Did we manage our time wisely?
- How well did we manage the interaction between participants?
- What did we do well that we should keep on doing?
- What did we do that we should avoid doing in future meetings?
- What didn't we do that we should have done?

Meeting evaluation techniques

There are lots of ways to quickly evaluate a meeting. Here are several simple options.

1) Draw a line down the middle of a flip chart or a white board. On one half write the word "Keep" and on the other half the word "Change." Ask people to reflect on the meeting and yell out things they think should be kept or changed for the next meeting. You'll need to encourage them to be candid about the problems they saw.

2) Each person gives the meeting a letter grade (A-F). After recording the grades, ask people for one or two reasons why they graded the meeting as they did.

3) Distribute a short survey card at the end of the meeting that asks people to comment directly on the evaluation questions.

4) Use a quick follow-up web-based survey. I'm a big fan of SurveyMonkey. You could set up a standard survey and just repeat it to your group after every meeting. Make it easy and react to the results, and you will help raise your group's willingness to provide feedback.

It doesn't matter how you collect the information. It only matters that you do collect and use it. The insights gained will lead to better meetings.

6.5 QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Describe essential techniques for meeting evaluation
2. List down the steps for productive meeting preparation
3. Elaborate the role of a secretary before, during and after the meeting
4. Why is taking minutes of the meeting important?
5. State the golden rules of meeting etiquette.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How to manage a meeting effectively?
2. Mention some important tips to create an effective meeting agenda
3. Define the role of minute taker
4. Explain the role of the chairperson in conducting a meeting
5. What goes into a good meeting agenda?

Multiple choice question

1. Give people time to prepare comments and ________________

A. Questions

B. Resume

C. Letter

D. Resign

2. Attach or embed supporting _______ and graphs

A. Charts

B. Documents

C. Photos

D. CDs

3. Another useful strategy for ensuring meetings remain effective and efficient includes implementing _________ meetings whenever appropriate

A. Stand-up

B. Sit down

C. Outdoor

D. Indoor

4. ______________ helps you sift through the data to know what is noteworthy and what should be left out.

A. Screening

B. Roaming

C. Critical thinking

D. Imagining

5. Give everyone a chance to speak and __________ participation from quieter colleagues.

E. Gossiping

F. Listening

G. Encourage

H. Talking

6.6 REFERENCE

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