

**GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS),  
COIMBATORE – 18  
POSTGRADUATE AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**SKILL BASED ELECTIVE–II –ENGLISH FOR WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION  
SEMESTER – IV**

**UNIT – III : INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**

**3.1. LEARNING TO WORK IN A TEAM**

In the best of all possible worlds, teams are formed deliberately and carefully to meet work needs that an individual or a group of individuals cannot meet as effectively. Although many groups are called "teams," not every work group is a team. In a work group, performance is a function of what its members do as individuals. The focus in a work group is individual goals and accountabilities. A team's performance is measured primarily by the products produced collectively by the team.

Teams share certain characteristics, including a clearly defined purpose (mission) and goals. Teamwork is defined by a shared commitment both to the team's process (how the team works together) and to its product (what work the team accomplishes). This commitment to team process is demonstrated through the development and use of team norms and ground rules, a willingness to pay attention to group process, and a sense of mutual accountability both to the members of the team as individuals and the team as a whole.

**Types of Teams**

Project teams are usually time-limited teams formed to complete a particular task. When the team completes its task, it disbands. Standing teams (sometimes called "intact" teams) are formed as ongoing organizational units. Teams that bring together members from different departments or functions are called cross-functional teams.

**What Makes a Team Successful?**

There are several factors identified as key to a team's success. They include:

- Shared understanding of the team's mission
- Commitment to the team's goals

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Agreed-upon ground rules
- An established decision-making model
- Effective group process including commitment to open communication, mutual accountability and appropriate self-evaluation

Working on a successful team (sometimes called a high-performing team) can be an exciting and empowering experience. When a team is working well, each member knows that they are part of something bigger than the individuals involved - that the team is greater than the sum of its parts. Team members in high-performing teams have a sense that the team can overcome obstacles and realize its goals. Communication is open; members can state their opinions knowing that differences of opinion are valued. Most importantly, successful teams don't just "feel good," they get their work done, meeting deadlines and achieving their goals.

The effective team working needs focus on the subsequent points

- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of teamwork.
- Describe the team life cycle.
- Design a team agreement.
- Set team goals.
- Develop an accountability plan.
- Apply communication techniques to a variety of situations.
- Create communication tools.
- Explain various decision-making/consensus techniques.

### **3.2. WORKPLACE ETIQUETTE**

When it comes to working in an office or other professional setting, etiquette matters. How you present yourself and interact with those around you—whether your coworkers, supervisors, or direct reports—speaks to who you are as a person and as a member of the team, and can directly influence the trajectory of your career. Here are certain actions and behaviors you just shouldn't

bring with you into a professional workplace. Doing so can have major negative impacts on your career. But for many individuals, proper workplace etiquette does not come as intuitively as you might think. Below are some of the biggest don'ts of office life.

## Workplace Etiquette: The Dos

### **1. Do arrive early.**

There's some common advice often given to new workers: You want to be in the office before your boss, and stay until after he or she leaves. You *will* be remembered for answering your phone at 8:01 a.m. in a world where tardiness is common (especially in major cities, where traffic can cause all kinds of headaches). Conversely, you will also be noticed if you consistently show up 15 minutes after everyone else—just not in the way you want.

### **2. Do network with people outside of your cubicle.**

Of course, it's important that you complete your work on time and up to standard. But it's also important to remember that a perk of having a job at a company you appreciate is meeting other people with similar interests who can share advice from their past experiences that you can use on the job.

That's why it's important to take networking opportunities seriously, especially when you're first starting on the job. Grabbing coffee or lunch with your coworkers, attending happy hour or other company functions, and simply making yourself available can go very far.

### **3. Do be willing to help out a coworker.**

If one of your coworkers asks you for help in completing a task, you should generally say yes—as long as you feel that you can realistically help them while also hitting your own deadlines. This is an opportunity to stand out and demonstrate your own knowledge and skills. It's also an opportunity to make a friend and bring someone into your corner for the future; you never know when that might come in handy.

### **4. Do bring in goodies.**

Who doesn't love to eat? If you have free time one night, baking cookies, brownies, or some other treats can be a really nice gesture for your coworkers—especially if you're celebrating a big win or going through a stressful period.

If you do choose to bring in treats, though, it's important to understand ahead of time whether any of your coworkers have allergies or dietary restrictions like gluten insensitivity. Bringing something in that everyone can enjoy will only make the gesture that much more meaningful.

#### **5. Do create a proper personal email address.**

It isn't uncommon to need to communicate with your coworkers after hours or on the weekend. While many organizations allow employees to log into work email remotely, some do not. It's important in these cases that you have a professional email address in the event you need to send an email to a coworker or your boss. "Foxychick123" isn't going to send the same impression as "firstname.lastname".

#### **6. Do jump at the chance to complete a new task.**

If your boss, superior, or coworkers ask you to work on a task that you've never worked on in the past, it's natural to feel nervous. But, that's no reason to decline the work. Accepting new projects expands your skillset and can lead to exciting opportunities down the line.

You were likely chosen because they have confidence in your abilities. Just make sure to ask questions, seek advice, and make sure you're on the right track before getting too bogged down in the task.

#### **7. Do be flexible.**

Sometimes, you're going to be tapped for a project or initiative that requires you to be flexible. You might be asked to work earlier or later hours than usual; you might be asked to perform duties or tasks that you don't necessarily want to perform, or that you weren't hired to do. There may come a day when you are asked to work a holiday—either to cover someone else's shift or to usher a project through to completion.

While it's never fun to work a holiday, a weekend, or to do "someone else's job," being willing to roll with the punches demonstrates that you value the company and take your role seriously, which will only help you in the long run.

#### **8. Do dress appropriately for the office.**

What constitutes appropriate will depend on the particular culture of your workplace. But it's always a good idea to dress to impress, especially when you're first starting a new role at a

company. Even if you don't have a formal dress code, save the crop tops, flip-flops, and see-through shirts for the weekend—no one will take you seriously if you don't.

### **9. Do make sure your earbuds are plugged in securely to your computer.**

Have you ever made the mistake of listening to music or a video on your laptop while in public, only to realize that your earbuds weren't plugged in and that everyone around you could hear? Talk about embarrassing.

Take it from me: It's only more embarrassing in the workplace. Your coworkers don't want to hear lyrics streaming from your 2 Chainz Pandora station.

### **10. Do be open-minded.**

Whether you're taking on new work, building relationships, or advancing in your career, you should do your best to remain open-minded. Nothing is known for certain, and being flexible and open to change will only help you in the long-run.

And finally...

### **11. Do wear a smile.**

Having a positive attitude about being at work will affect your job performance significantly. Appearing happy, friendly, and approachable at work can do wonders for your career. Never underestimate the power of a smile!

It's okay to make mistakes!

It's understandable to be nervous as you move into your first job after graduation or when you make a career change to a completely new company or industry. But, it's also important to remember that it's okay to make mistakes; Nobody is perfect. As long as you're constantly growing and learning from those mistakes, and make an effort to stop making the same mistake in the future, your coworkers will notice.

## **3.3. PARTICIPATING IN GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

The Group discussion is a task, which is generally aimed at understanding and evaluating candidate's behavior in a group. Through this method, interviewers can compare and assess a

candidate's knowledge, communication, and mental strength. It is quite obvious through the name that Group discussion involves more than one member and it happens within a group. **There could be different kind of participants in the group in terms of the roles that they play. Some of them are:**

**Starting point:** You will notice that in the group, there will be some member who likes to initiate. One who is confident enough to start the discussion and set the tone right at the very first beginning is called the initiator. This position is a bit risky. If you are the one who is starting the discussion you have to be extra conscious. But do not think that if you have begun the discussion, you will keep your mouth shut during the whole conversation. You have to be active throughout the discussion.

**Clear Facts:** Few members of the group will be data driven. They provide precise data and facts and support their statement with statistics. They provide all the data in a logical manner and make their point stronger with facts. But it is also true that with only data you cannot win a discussion. You have to believe in those figures and put your mind enough to interpret it well. And yes...all your facts should be clear and truthful.

**Controller:** Some members in the group like to control the discussion. They think whatever they are saying should be approved by others as well which may or may not be the case. Others in the group can very well disagree to the point you are putting forth.

**Moderate Referee:** This category of the people acts as a coordinator. They ensure that each member gets sufficient time and chance to speak. When an argument gets heated up, they try to keep them calm and bring to a normal discussion by helping others putting across their words. This person is generally a good listener but might not be taken very favorably by others lest he should take all the leadership.

**Born Leaders:** They are born to lead. They do not have to put in much effort to lead a team. Their voice, their calm head, their gestures say it all. They do not fall in the trap of arguing rather support their points by strong logic, facts, and adequate examples. They have the ability to manage the flow of discussion and give it a right direction. Towards the end, a leader summarizes the entire discussion and squeeze out the conclusion.

**Provocative:** This person considers himself All in All. They give orders to others in the group and want everyone to act according to them. Sometimes they are annoying and provoke others

with a high pitch or irritating voice. They eat up time of others by saying something which is not so relevant to the topic. They are poor listener and cannot comprehend what other's points are.

**Fault Finder:** There are some group members who intentionally find fault in everything that the other person is saying. They have objection on anything and everything about other's point of view. They criticize almost every other point.

**Followers:** This is just contrary to the above-mentioned category – fault finder or criticizer. This category of people generally agree and support other's point. They show their agreement by nodding their head or with some other gesture which normally means that they cannot agree more to the point. This kind of people generally do not score well as they do not show their own significant points and logics and merely depend on other's views

**Question Mark:** This kind of people, always question others. He/she sometimes irritate other group members by questioning even for a simple understood fact. Rather than putting their own opinions, they tend to interrogate and raise a question in other's points.

**Stopwatch:** These kinds of people are quite interesting to observe. During the discussion, they just do not get swayed by the flow of topic, rather keep a check on every other aspect, such as how much time has passed, how much time is still left, who all have had the chance to give their opinions and who have not, etc. They are keen to maintain the order and dignity. But it is better for these category people to come up with their own impactful views.

**Aggressive:** These members easily get annoyed and get antagonistic at times. They care less about other's points, sentiments, feelings, and values. They attack verbally in their counterparts and harsh in their tone.

**Audience/Viewer:** They do not have their own substantial views and opinions. They hardly speak up and hardly make any difference. They just see and listen what others are speaking and never put their own views forward.

**Indecisive:** This category of people are unlikely to get selected as they are very much indecisive and having a fickle mind. They sometimes contradict their own words and statements. They are unable to express their ideas in an organized manner. They also get too emotional during the conversation and unnecessarily divert the topic from the main point. They agree or disagree with anyone and everyone.

**Capturer:** This kind of people record every point what others are saying. They take down notes and facts, details, etc. They can be referred later on when someone in the group has forgotten any point.

**The Settler:** They can be referred as Harmonizer and can find a mid-way of any problem. They avoid extremes and contribute in releasing tension within the group when an argument heats up.

**Gist Maker:** This defines the position as someone who summarized the entire discussion and draws some valid conclusion through the topic of group discussion.

**Blockhead:** This kind of group members does not take any initiative to present their views. They are lacking innovative or rather any ideas, opinions and logical views. They do not contribute any positively to the group.

Each of these roles is a part of a Group discussion and plays an important role within that. Their behavior and the role they are playing can talk a lot about their personality, mindset and their thinking.

### 3.4. COMMUNICATION SYSTEM IN WORKPLACE

Communication in the workplace is one of the signs of a high-performance culture. Exchanging information and ideas within an organization is called workplace communication. However, effective communication occurs when a message is sent and received accurately. In every aspect of life (both professional and personal), effective communication is important to success and happiness. **Effective communication in the workplace** is central to all business goals.

Why is communication so important in the workplace?

- It avoids confusion
- It provides purpose
- It builds a positive company culture
- It creates accountability

Improving communication starts at the top to meet your business intent. Often, effective communication at the workplace is what distinguishes a good leader from a great one.



Communication at workplace defines organizational goals and helps coworkers collaborate. This is a step towards a fundamental business practice for a committed and productive workforce. In a study, companies ranked communication skills twice as **important as managerial skills**. Here are the skills that employers mostly seek in new hires, ranked in terms of priority.

- Oral communication
- Listening
- Written communication
- Public speaking
- Adaptability

It's vital to measure communication so you can see what works, what doesn't, and tweak it accordingly. Workplace communication is important to your growth and success. It allows everyone to share their inputs and feel that their ideas are being valued.

### **How do you improve communication?**

What are effective communication strategies we can use at work to increase productivity?

- **Start using the right tools for your business**

Fortunately, tools like **ProofHub**, Slack, Zoom can help you boost company communication providing a total seamless communication experience.

- **Encourage two-way communication**

Encourage your employees to ask questions or voice their opinions helping them feel empowered.

- **Tell people what they are doing right**

It is a good idea to tell people about their good things on a daily basis.

- **Specific and descriptive feedback**

Give feedback that is concrete. Give directions to the person exactly on what they are doing well and what needs to be improved.

- **Schedule a compulsory check-in**

Organizing a short quick call with a very specific agenda brings in a lot of advantages.

- **Organize engaging team building activities**

According to a **2017 report by Gallup**, companies with engaged workers generally earn 2.5-times more revenue. **Team building activities** enhance productivity and engagement.

- **What is your communication process**

Timely examine the strategy of your communication so that it reaps gains to the company.

Communication can be formal, informal, internal or external. And within an organization, it is important to develop a healthy and beneficial communication process. Effective communication is the key to achieving long-term success, so make sure you follow the above outline strategies. No matter what stage you are in the workplace, you need to communicate ideas well in the workplace, so effective communication.

### **3.5. TELEPHONING AND USING THE INTERNET**

Telephone communication is one of the most important forms of communication within the company. Although today its use is being replaced by other forms of communication (such as email), phone use is one of the most common means by which to materialize both internal and external communications. It is very important in business because it is the medium through which the first contact with, or from the company is made. So, before any personal contact, the usual thing is to make a phone call to arrange an interview or to specify any matter or topic. The interlocutor at the other end of the line will form an idea about the company depending on the impression after this first telephone contact. In any case, beyond the business sector, it is also crucial to follow a proper technique when having telephone conversations, as it is an essential tool to achieve our goals in a phone call, either as its senders or its recipients. From the standpoint of business communication, telephone use has an enormous advantage: interlocutors don't see each other, and this may work for solving tricky or unfavourable situations. As interlocutors don't see each other, the arguments provided in a telephone conversation may be more solid and credible if we apply the proper techniques and procedures. Another advantage of this type of communication is that we can do other things as we speak, such as taking notes, search for something on the computer, ask something to a work mate (always with discretion), and so on. Thus, we may say that applying the appropriate telephone

techniques is essential to get the most out of this communication tool in business. Thanks to advances in technology, telephone communication devices have evolved generating new services and expanding its capabilities. The significant factors of telephone etiquette are 1. Attitude to Listen 2. Polite Tone 3. Appropriate usage of words 4. Clarity of speech and 5. Confidence

### **INTERNET:**

The Macmillan dictionary (2011) defines the internet as a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols.

The Webwise team at [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) offers a simplified explanation of what the internet is. This simple explanation shall be the start of trying to understand this complex phenomenon. According to [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk), the internet is a global network of computers that works much like the postal system, only at sub-second speeds. Just as the postal service enables people to send one another envelopes containing messages, the internet enables computers to send one another small packets of digital data. For that to work, they use a common 'language' called TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). If one is on the net, they have an IP address.

The Internet is a global networking system that can be used on most devices nowadays and has become an essential part of our lives. In today's technological era, most of the companies are getting their operations done over the Internet. There are various uses of the Internet by which companies and individuals are making their daily tasks more productive and more comfortable. Internet is used in

- Communication
- E-Commerce
- Education
- Entertainment
- Social Networking
- Research
- Advertising
- Campaigning

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