

K. J. SOMAIYA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES AND RESEARCH
Vidyavihar, Mumbai- 400077

Program: PGDM-RM/FS/Comm (Batch 2016-18), Trimester-I
Subject: Business Communication
(End Term Examination)

Maximum Marks: 50

Duration: 3 Hours

Date : 21/09/2016

Instructions:

- 1. Question No.1 is compulsory.**
- 2. Attempt any four questions from Question Nos. 2 to 7.**
- 3. Each Question carries 10 marks.**

QUESTION 1: Case Study
10)

(Marks

“As Rajesh prepared to leave the offices of ZS, UK, he felt a tinge of sadness. Today is his last day at office and he will be taking the morning flight to India the next day. It was an assignment which was supposed to have lasted for 18 months, but here he was leaving at the end of just six months. He was being sent back because of discipline issues. Rajesh was unsure if he really deserved the punishment or if he was the victim of racism.

Language and accent were not the only issues. Rajesh used to bring his own lunch which he heated in the common kitchen. The strong aroma of Indian food brought forth many comments from the clients. Most would appreciate the aroma but many would hurriedly excuse themselves from the kitchen. Gradually, Rajesh could sense that there was something wrong, as none of the clients on his floor would join him at lunch. Rajesh also became aware that some people actually avoided him and were a bit reluctant to help him out with project issues. Maybe he took a long time understanding or maybe, they just did not like talking to him. There was a particular group who made their dislike for him obvious. Once he found them discussing cricket and Rajesh, a great lover of the sport cricket, could not stop himself from joining the discussion. They listened for a while but suddenly changed the topic of their discussion to rugby. Rajesh was left wondering if he had said something wrong.

Things reached a boil when one of the employees of ZS, Simon C, spoke to Rajesh in a singularly derogatory way. It was raining heavily that day and Rajesh had brought his trusted pink umbrella to office. As he was about to leave for home, he noticed a group of people chatting and laughing. He could sense that the joke was about him. As he passed them, Simon remarked in jest “It seems you Indians have a peculiar taste when it comes to colour. Only sissies have pink umbrellas in our country.” This was the last straw. Rajesh literally exploded. He called Simon a ‘racist pig’ and threatened to sue the company.

Next morning, this was big news. Russell was very upset that Rajesh had used such strong language. He called Rajesh and asked why he said and what he did and also why he was kept in the dark if Rajesh had issues with the team members. The matter was escalated to the ZS Project Manager, who in turn escalated it to the ZS HR head in the UK. The decision was swift. Rajesh should leave before the week was over. This was a major discipline issue which could not be tolerated. Rajesh felt victimized. It was not just the racism at the workplace which bothered him; his own company’s lack of empathy shocked him.

QUESTION 2: Attempt the following:

(Marks 10)

Describe what the following body movements suggest when someone exhibits them during a business conversation. How do such movements influence your interpretations of spoken words?

- a. Shifting one's body continuously while seated in a conversation.
- b. Looking around the room and glancing at others.
- c. Extending a limp, weak handshake.
- d. Sitting in a reclined, sprawled position.
- e. Rolling one's eyes.

QUESTION 3: Attempt the following:

(Marks 10)

A. One of the major remedies for a headache in America is a product called Tylenol, manufactured by Johnson & Johnson Company. It sells millions of tablets and capsules on a daily basis and the trust in the quality of the product as well as the integrity of the company are the salient selling points. The company has 80,000 employees worldwide and every pharmacy and chemist shop in America is an outlet for the sale of the product. The company spends a considerable amount of money in promoting its products.

In 1982, Johnson & Johnson had an unfortunate setback. Extra Strength Tylenol was linked to several deaths in Chicago area. The analysis reports indicated that someone had placed highly toxic cyanide in some of the capsules and put these capsules back into the bottles and put back the bottles on the pharmacy shelves. The tragedy came into public view when four members of the same family died of the same causes. At the same time, three other people died under similar circumstances in other parts of the city and medical specialists confirmed that these deaths were linked to cyanide poisoning the Tylenol capsules.

At first, there was speculation that the capsules were tampered with at the manufacturing plant. However, this possibility was eliminated due to the fact that there were different lot numbers on the bottles clearly suggesting that Tylenol had been packaged to different parts of the country.

With more than 31 million bottles of Extra Strength Tylenol capsules on the market shelves on any given day, it would have been impossible for Johnson & Johnson to have a contingency disaster plan to deal with such an incident of such catastrophic nature. However, through various successful communication techniques, the company contacted their distributors, medical professionals, and the public. The company recalled all the bottles and removed them from the shelves of chemist stores as a preventive measure to curb more deaths from occurring. Additionally, the company sent half a million telegrams to doctors and hospitals advising them to stop recommending Extra Strength Tylenol capsules to their patients. These

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actions immediately communicated a strong message to all that the company was concerned with the welfare of the people, and not mere profits. This further confirmed that the company was acting responsibly and in a trustworthy manner.

To reach the general public, the company established a special communications team that conducted press conferences daily to apprise the public of any new developments in the case and to answer queries. To deal with the concerns and morale of the employees, the company contacted all 80,000 employees worldwide, as well as those who had already retired and explained to them about this tragic event.

With clear and honest communication in a variety of ways to reach all segments of society, Johnson & Johnson kept the public trust and maintained its integrity, that in six weeks following the crisis, it was able to reintroduce the product into the market in a tamper proof bottle. The company also developed an impressive advertising campaign to accompany the reintroduction of the product. Within six weeks of the reintroduction, a sales force of 2, 250 people had made over one million presentations to doctors and other medical professionals.

The cost of this extensive communication network was over 100 million dollars to the company, but this communication was extremely effective in maintaining the company's image and helped recapture over 95% of the previous market for their product. They also managed to maintain the confidence of the consumers, doctors, and retailers.

- a. How do you, as a student of communications, view the company's communication networks and strategies in the light of this crisis? Discuss. **(Marks 06)**
- b. What communication policies can be drawn up by the company for effective disaster management? **(Marks 04)**

Or

B. The policy of internal communication at Nutshell Corporation changed when the new MD took charge. Mr. Jaiprakash Rane, the new MD, was of the view that the employees should be able to talk to their seniors about any and every issue. Hence, he introduced the system of an open door policy, which he felt was a very good option of improving the upward direction of communication. This, he felt could help in raising the morale of employees and enhancing their productivity. He encouraged all the Department Heads and teams in his organization to do the same.

The employees were of course apprehensive at first to come forward, but through the use of the grapevine Mr. Rane spread the word that this policy was to encourage everyone to help in improving relationships at every level so as to develop a healthy environment in the organization that can result in enhanced productivity.

Although it took some time, the wait was worth it. The employees came forward to express their grievances and suggestions. Mr. Rane empathetically listened to all and even took up issues at the regular meetings that he convened.

Employees were happy to be heard by their bosses without hostility and by the MD himself. They felt a

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sense of gratitude when their problems were discussed and even solved. This resulted in decreasing the attrition rate of the company considerably, and increasing the loyalty factor. It also enhanced the productivity of the organization drastically.

Word spread in the market as well, and improved the image of the company as well as the shares.

Even years after Mr. Rane retired and his son the young Rane took charge; the policy remained the same and the satisfied employees till date leave the organization, only at retirement.

Questions:

- a. From your understanding of the above case, discuss the statement: “The different directions of communication have their own importance in an organization”. **(Marks 05)**
- b. From the above case, discuss the importance of using formal and informal communication. When can grapevine communication be useful or harmful to an organization? **(Marks 05)**

QUESTION 4: Attempt the following:

(Marks

10)

- a. Write an inquiry memo to the HR administrator. Ask questions regarding policies, procedures, or other matters that affect your life. Explain why you are making your inquiry.

Or

- b. In the role of a senior decision maker in business, write a policy memo for your employees on flextime. Discuss all essentials pertaining to this policy.

QUESTION 5: Attempt the following:

(Marks

10)

- a. You are the supervisor of the R & D department of a small information technology company. You have received a letter from Nitesh Kapoor applying for a position with your company. Kapoor is currently with ABC Computers, for whom you are completing a project. It was Kapoor’s favorable recommendation that got you the contract, and you hope with Kapoor’s help, to continue to do business with ABC in the future.

Kapoor’s background is impressive with an education from the University of California, Berkeley, USA and 10 years of experience in research and development. He is well-known and favorably regarded.

Some discreet inquiries reveal why Kapoor is eager to leave ABC and why you do not want to hire him. He has an irritating and difficult personality that keeps him from being effective with higher management and generates resentment from those working under him

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Draft a suitable buffer and middle (body) for your letter that firmly closes the door but that; as far as possible, will keep his goodwill.

Or

- b. You have found it easy to say yes to recommendation letter requests from former employees who were top performers, and you have learned to say no to those people who did not perform so well. The requests you struggle with are from employees in the middle- who did not really excel, but did not cause any trouble either.

You have just received a request from a computer systems specialist who directly falls in the middle of the middle. Unfortunately, he is applying for a job at a firm that you know has high demands on its employees and generally hires the best of the best. You do not want a reputation in the industry for recommending weak candidates.

Write an effective buffer that will help you set the stage for the negative news and a suitable middle offering your explanations.

QUESTION 6: Attempt the following:
10)

(Marks

A. Evaluate the following letter: Consider tone, organization, clarity and consideration. Rewrite the letter incorporating the necessary changes.

Dear Mr. Jones

Unfortunately, we cannot allow you to apply the lease payments you've been making for the past ten months toward the purchase of your Sako 600 copier.

Company policy does not allow such conversion. Have you ever wondered why we can offer such low leasing and purchase prices? Obviously, we couldn't stay in business long if we agreed to proposals such as yours.

You've had the Sako 600 copier for ten months now, Mr. Jones, and you say you like its versatility and reliability. Perhaps we could interest you in another Sako model – one that's more within your price range. Do give us a call.

Sincerely

Or

B. Evaluate the following adjustment letter from a manufacturer to retailer. What do you like and dislike about it? Suggest specific improvements in the tone, organization, accuracy and adequacy of explanations.
10)

(Marks

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“Some time ago, a batch of material having bad formulation, escaped detection by our quality control people. The line inspectors caught most of the finished suits before they were invoiced. However, some were shipped. Apparently your order was among them. The situation has since been corrected, and we don’t believe you will have this problem with a replacement. Accordingly, a special shipping label is enclosed for returning your defective merchandise to us. It will be promptly exchanged upon receipt. Please let us know if we may be of further service.”

**QUESTION 7: Attempt any one of the following:
10)**

(Marks

Sandeep has just joined the Bangalore office of a New York based MNC. As part of his training he will be spending 3 months in the US, but has already been assigned to a team with members in New York, Tokyo and Bangalore. Sarah, the New York based project manager, has scheduled a teleconference meeting for Tuesday. Sandeep will be traveling to Delhi to get his US visa over the meeting time. Here’s their conversation...

Sarah: Can we do the teleconference tomorrow, 7 pm for you, or should we wait until you get back?

Sandeep: Better if we can wait, but I can do it if you like – if it’s necessary.

Sarah: Do you want to postpone it? Tell me, yes or no?

1. What cultural and/or personality traits are influencing the communication? **(Marks 4)**
2. What is Sarah likely to be thinking/feeling? **(Marks 3)**
3. What is Sandeep likely to be thinking/feeling? **(Marks 3)**

Or

Based in Cleveland, Ohio, Jim is has been managing a software development team in Pune for the past two years. He has been working closely with Aruna, the Indian team leader, to develop a new networking program. While Jim has over 25 years of experience in software development, Aruna knows the program inside and out. While reviewing his work from the previous week, Jim discovers that he made a mistake in the programming code. He notices that Aruna corrected his error, but wonders why Aruna did not bring it to his attention so that he could avoid delays and keep from making the same mistake in the future.

1. Should Aruna have informed Jim of his mistake? Justify your answer with an explanation of why or why not? **(Marks 5)**
2. If Jim wants to be notified of his mistakes in the future, discuss how should he

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proceed?
5)

(Marks