

CHAPTER THREE - COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

7Cs

- ⇒ To compose effective messages you need to apply certain specific communication principles that provide guidelines for choice of **content and style** of **presentation-adapted to the purpose and receiver of your message.**
- ⇒ These principles **tie in closely** with the basic concepts of the communication process and are important for both written and oral communications.
- ⇒ They are called the “seven C’s,” and involve;
 - 1) **Completeness,**
 - 2) **Conciseness,**
 - 3) **Consideration,**
 - 4) **Concreteness,**
 - 5) **Clarity,**
 - 6) **Courtesy and**
 - 7) **Correctness.**

1.COMPLETENESS

- Your business message is “complete” when it contains ***all facts the reader or listener needs for the reaction you desire.***
- Remember that communicators differ in their mental filters; they are influenced by their
 - **backgrounds,**
 - **viewpoints,**
 - **needs,**
 - **experiences,**
 - **attitudes,**
 - **status, and emotions.**
- ❑ ***Completeness refers to ways of ensuring that **all the information** needed by the reader/listener to respond or act as intended.***
- ❑ **Incomplete messages:**
 - ***Result in additional expenses***
 - ***Spoil goodwill***
 - ***Lead to confusion and debates***

Completeness is necessary for several reasons:

- ➔ **First**, complete messages are more likely *to bring the desired results* without the expense of additional messages.
- ➔ **Second**, they can *do a better job of building goodwill*.
- ➔ **Third**, they can help *avert costly lawsuits* that may result if important information is missing.
- ➔ **Last**, papers that seem inconsequential can be surprisingly important if the information they contain is complete and effective.
- ➔ In high-level conferences, in courtrooms, and in governmental hearings, the battle often centers on an ordinary-looking message that becomes important because of the complete information it contains.

As you strive for completeness, keep the following guidelines-in mind:

- Answer all questions asked: the first important guideline to make your message complete is to answer all questions that are asked.
 - When ever you reply to an inquiry, ***try to answer all questions-stated and implied.***
 - **look for questions**: some may even appear buried within a paragraph. Locate them and answer them precisely.
- **Provide all necessary information**: answering ***the five W's*** helps make messages clear i.e., check for the **five W's** (who, what, where, when and why) and any other essentials.
 - ***What you want and how much?***
 - ***When you need it?***
 - ***Where it is to be sent?***
 - ***To whom it is to be sent?***
 - ***How payment will be made?***
- **Give something extra, when desirable**: use your good judgment in offering additional material if the message was incomplete.

2. CONCISENESS

- ❌ Conciseness is saying what you have to ***say in the fewest possible words without sacrificing the other C qualities***. Conciseness refers to writing/expressing the message in as few words as possible.
- ❌ A concise message saves time and expense for both sender and receiver.
- ❌ Conciseness contributes to emphasis. By eliminating unnecessary words, you help make important ideas stand out.
- ❌ To achieve conciseness it is recommended to observe the following suggestions:
 - **Eliminate wordy expressions**
 - **Include only relevant statements**

i. Eliminate Wordy Expressions

- The elimination of unnecessary words from your statements is the first thing that helps your message to be concise.
- This important guideline can be explained by emphasizing on five points.
- ➔ **1. Use single** – word substitutes instead of phrases whenever possible without changing meanings. Here below are some examples:

Wordy – In accordance with your request

Concise - **As you requested**

Wordy - In spite of the fact that

Concise - **Although**

- ➔ 2. **Omit trite**, unnecessary expressions, such as “allow me to say,” in reply I wish to state,” please be advised,” Also, instead of “please find attached” (or “enclosed”),
- ➔ use concise statements like “attached are,” “enclosed is” or “the enclosed list includes”

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3. **Omit “which” and “that” clauses whenever possible.**

- **Wordy**: She bought desks that are of the executive type.
- **Concise**: She bought executive – type desks.

4. **Avoid overusing “It is,” “It was,” “There is,” “There was,” “There are,” “There were” at sentence beginnings.**

- **Wordy**: There are four rules that should be observed.
- **Concise**: Four rules should be observed.

5. **Use a verb in the present tense and active voice;** using present tenses and active voices will make your messages to be over simple and understandable.

- **Wordy**: The total balance due will be found on page 2 of this report.
- **Concise**: The balance due is on page 2 of this report.

ii. Include only Relevant Statements

- The effective, concise message should omit not only unnecessarily wordy expressions but also **irrelevant material**.
- To be sure you include only relevant facts; observe the following suggestions:
 - **Stick to the purpose of the message.**
 - **Prune irrelevant words and rambling sentences**
 - **Omit information obvious to the receiver; do not repeat at length what that person has already told you.**
 - **Avoid long introductions, unnecessary explanation, excessive adjectives and prepositions, pompous words, gushy politeness.**

iii. Avoid Unnecessary Repetition

- Sometimes **repetition** is necessary for emphasis but it is a problem when someone repeats the message over and over again (two or three times without reason)
- **Here are three ways to eliminate unnecessary repetition:**
 - ➞ **Use a shorter name** after you have mentioned the long one once: Instead of the “Arba Minch Textile Factory”, “Arba Minch factory”,
 - ➞ **Use pronouns or initials** rather than repeat long names:
 - ➞ **Cut out all needless repetition** of phrases and sentences.
- ➞ **NB:** Please do not forget that busy business professionals prefer messages that express thoughts in the fewest words possible. Well written business messages are only long enough to present all the necessary information.

3. CONSIDERATION

- È **Consideration** means that you prepare every message with **the recipient in mind** and try to put your self in his/her place.
- È Try to visualize your readers (or listeners)-with their desires, problems, circumstances, emotions, and probable reactions to your request. Then handle the matter from their point of view.
- È This thoughtful consideration is also called **“you-attitude,”** empathy, the human touch, and understanding of human nature, however, it does not mean, that you should overlook the needs of your organization.
- È In a broad but true sense, consideration underlies the other **six C’s** of good business communication.
- È However, in all **four specific** ways you can indicate you are considerate:
 - Focus on **“you”** instead of **“I”** and **“we.”**
 - Show reader **benefit or interest** in reader.
 - Emphasize on **positive, pleasant facts**.
 - **Apply integrity & ethics.**

Focus on 'you' instead of 'I' & 'we'

- Usually it is very desirable to get the **attention of your reader into the first** paragraph or the attention of the person hearing you in the first few minutes or even seconds.
 - If psychologically desirable, begin with “you” or “your,” and keep your reader in the message (tactfully) until you finish.
- The opposite of you-attitude is **we-attitude**, in which the writer views every matter from his or her own (or the organization's) standpoint rather than from the reader's

Show Reader Benefit or Interest in Reader

- Whenever possible and true, show how your readers will **benefit from** whatever the message asks or announces.
- In situations where actual direct reader benefit is impossible or irrelevant to the subject matter, the message should at least **show interest** in and concern for the reader's needs or viewpoint.
- Even a simple request gets better response when a reader-benefit plug accompanies it.
 - For example, an insurance company that wanted to update its address files sent to half of its policyholders a double postcard with this message.

Emphasize the positive, pleasant Facts

- To emphasize the positive facts means:
 - **Stressing what can be done instead of what cannot be done; and**
 - **Focusing on words your recipient can consider favorably.**
- The reader (or listener) wants to know what you can do for him/her.
 - **For most people negative words like no, won't, cannot, never, impossible trigger unpleasant emotional reactions.**
- By making clear what you can or will do, you **(by implication)** often make clear what you cannot do, without using a single negative word.
 - **Negative-Unpleasant:** It is impossible to open an account for you.
 - **Positive-Pleasant:** As soon as your signature card reaches us, we **will gladly open** an account for you.

Apply Integrity & Ethics

- To be truly considerate, you need also to apply **integrity** – **high moral standards, personal honor, truthfulness, & sincerity** – to your written & oral messages.
- **Ethics** is concerned with what is right human conduct. Codes of ethics provide **standards enabling us to determine** the fundamental distinction between right & wrong human behavior.
- To build your **company's image** integrity, ethical conduct, fair standards & honesty in communications with persons outside & inside your organization required consistently.
- When you show consideration for your customers, you try to let them know you are aware of & are doing something **about their interest & needs.**

4. CONCRETNESS

- Ⓟ Communicating concretely means being **specific, definite and vivid** rather than **vague and general**.
- Ⓟ The following **guidelines should help** you compose concrete, convincing messages.

a) Use specific facts and figures

- If possible, try to substitute an exact fact or figure for a general word to make your message more concrete and convincing using specific facts and figures whenever possible adds up to the content of your message.

b) Put action in your verbs

- Strong verbs can activate other words and help make your sentences definite. **Generally use active rather than passive verbs**, because active verbs help make your sentences more specific, personal, concise and emphatic.

c) Choose Vivid, Image- Building words

- Among the devices you can use to make your messages forceful, vivid, and specific are **comparisons, figurative language, and concrete** instead of abstract nouns.

5. CLARITY

- Clarity means getting your messages across so that the receiver will understand what you are trying to convey.
- Some ways that help you make your message clear include:

a) Choose short, familiar, conversational words

- When you have a choice between a long word and a short one, use the short, familiar word that your reader or listener will quickly understand.

b) Construct effective sentences and paragraphs

- Arranging your words in well constructed sentences and paragraphs is also an essential task that requires adaptation to your reader. Important characteristics to consider are length, unity, and coherence.
- Short sentences are preferred. The suggested average sentence length should be about 17 to 20 words.
- In a sentence – Whether simple, compound, or complex **unity means** that you have one main idea and any other ideas in the sentence must be closely related to it.

c) Include Examples, Illustrations, and other visual Aids, when desirable

- You can improve the clarity by giving your recipients an **example, analogy, or illustration**.
- Furthermore, **visual aids, such as headings, tabulations, itemizations, pictures, charts**-are definite aids to clarity and easy understanding. Also, typographical aids can be useful some important

6. COURTESY

- Courtesy messages help to strengthen present business friendships, as well as make new friends. Courtesy stems from sincere **you-attitude**. It is not merely politeness with mechanical insertion of “pleases” and “thank- you.”

- **Guidelines to be courteous:**

- a) **Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful and appreciative instead of bluntness**

- Writers who send **cordial, courteous** messages of deserved congratulations and appreciations help build **goodwill**.
 - Sometimes, **silence** can also be considered significantly discourteous.

- b) **Omit expressions that irritate, hurt or belittle**

- The thoughtful business communicator should avoid expressions that might offend the reader or listener; **irritating**, and **questionably humorous**.

- c) **Grant and apologize good-naturedly**

- Whenever you grant a customer’s request, begin your letter with the **best news first** and inject a courteous, ungrudging tone.

7. CORRECTNESS

- △ The correctness principle comprises more than proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- △ A message may be perfect grammatically and mechanically but still insult or lose a customer and fail to achieve its purpose.
- △ To ensure correctness in a business message, means the writer should:

- △ **Use the right level of language**

- △ **The three levels of language- formal, informal and substandard overlap** because of our ever changing language. Some words once considered substandard have moved into the informal level, and some once-informal words are now acceptable on a formal level.

- △ **Maintain acceptable writing mechanics**

- △ Acceptable writing mechanics include correct punctuation, capitalization, syllabication, and spelling- plus correct sentence and paragraph structure.

△ Choose non-discriminatory expressions

- △ Another important requirement for correctness is “**equal treatment of the sexes**” and **nonbiased toward people of different races, ethnic origins**, and physical features, occupational roles and achievements, personal characteristics, physical and mental attributes humanity at large, names and various title designations.

△ Check accuracy of figures, facts and words

- △ Absolute accuracy is essential for effective writing and oral messages. When figures, facts and some words are incorrectly used, they can cause serious problems. To be sure of the accuracy of facts, communicators should verify all statements before writing and again **before signing or approving, messages.**

△ Apply all other pertinent C qualities

- △ We need to use the **other C's** in the communication process to keep the correctness of our message to have the right response from the receiver.