



## **INTRODUCTION TO VERBAL COMMUNICATION : ORAL**

Man is the only species gifted with language, and the use of language is primarily found in speech; writing comes afterwards. That is why we are taking up oral communication before its written counter-part. In any organization, as in every day life, both formally and informally, we communicate more orally than in writing. It is primarily oral communication that builds up human relationship. It is the use of the gift of speech or talking, that brings the members of a family, neighbours and friends, and likewise, colleagues in an organization together. Without oral communication any organization will become just lifeless. Its importance, therefore, cannot be overemphasized.

### **FORMAL VS INFORMAL ORAL COMMUNICATION**

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

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

Side by side with, and in addition to, the informal oral communication, various kinds of formal oral communications take place in an organization. Very often people in business have to make formal presentations before a group that may be large or small. At other times they have to participate in meetings and group discussions. Time to time

they have to appear for or conduct interviews. Most of the letters and reports are largely dictated. All these are formal kinds of oral communication. In this way we see that both formal and informal types of oral communication thrive together.

Verbal communication is performed through human speech. Oral communication requires correctness of language and expression. The speaker should choose appropriate words, proper gesture and postures (all that comes under behaviour) so that it is effective oral communication includes both verbal and non-verbal communication.

### Advantages of Oral Communication

Oral communication is the most frequently used means of sending message because it has certain distinct advantages. Some of these advantages are given below :

- The greatest advantage of oral communication is that it provides immediate feedback and clarification. People listening to the speaker can ask questions, make comments, add to the information provided and so on. Both the speaker and the listener/listeners by turn can enter into a kind of short dialogue and make the whole communication event purposeful.
- Oral communication builds up a healthy climate in the organization by bringing the superior and the subordinate together. This gives the subordinate a feeling of importance and the superior a better understanding of his mind. Informal or planned meetings can greatly contribute to the understanding of problems/issues in which they become partners.
- Oral communication is a time saving device. While a letter, dictated and typed, entered in the diary, been put in the envelope and carried to the person addressed will take a long time, oral transmission of the message makes the communication immediately effective. That is why many skilful managers cut down on paper work and save time by calling up their juniors or walking up to their superiors.
- Oral communication is the most effective tool of persuasion as it lends a personal touch to the whole business. Resolving a conflict will not be possible in the absence of oral communication. Unless a manager/supervisor 'talks' to the workers in a persuasive tone, the conflict will remain there. No exchange of letters can achieve what a meeting can.
- In continuation of the previous point we can see that oral communication is very effective in interacting with groups. The speaker can immediately understand group's reaction and arrive a satisfactory conclusion by putting his views across and exchanging points.
- Oral communication is also very economical, both in terms of money and time. It saves the money spent on stationery in organization in which the managers insist on every instruction, every message in writing.
- Oral communication provides ample scope to the sender of the message to make himself clear by suitable changing his words, voice, tone, pitch, etc. On the other hand, the words once written cannot be changed. In other words, the message

once transmitted in written form cannot be retracted. Oral Communication on the other hand, has the advantage of on the spot adaptation/withdrawal/improvement.

### Disadvantages of Oral Communication

Oral communication also has some disadvantages as discussed below :

- Oral communication does not always save time and money. Quite often meetings go on without any result or agreement achieved. Such meetings can be very tiring and wasteful.
- Oral communication in itself is not always effective. There are certain conditions that must be necessarily fulfilled in order to make it effective. It depends mainly on the attitude of the sender and the receiver of the message.
- Human memory being what it is, oral messages cannot be retained for a long time. It means they must be acted upon immediately. They cannot be found in record books and we cannot refer back to them. This is a serious limitation of oral communication.
- In the absence of a taped or written record, oral messages do not have any legal validity.
- Oral messages also can lead to misunderstanding if the speaker has not carefully recognized his thought or the listener misses the message on account of his inattentiveness.
- Much depends upon the length of the message. If it is long it is not suitable for oral transmission. There are chances of something vital getting dropped or misconstrued.
- It is difficult to assign responsibility for anything going amiss or any mistake by omission or commission in oral communication.

### LISTENING

No oral communication can be effective without proper listening on the part of the receiver of the message. We also know, how a tactful manager can very positively handle the grapevine or informal channel of communication by 'empathic' listening. Here, in this section, we are going to focus on making oral communication effective by improving listening.

Post listening may defeat the very purpose of oral communication. It has been found by authorities on the subject that generally people retain only about one fourth of what they hear after two days. In this way listening is the weakest link in oral communication.

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

The following points determine active listening :

1. 'Stop talking' : Unfortunately, most of us are more prone to talking than listening. Generally we are more interested in what we want to say than in what we are being told. So we must stop talking while we listen.
2. 'Put the speaker at Ease' : If the speaker/talker is not at ease he will not be able to do his job satisfactorily. So it is very important for the listener/listeners to make the talker comfortable.
3. 'Show the Speaker that you want to listen' : The talker must be given to understand that the listener/listeners are eager to listen. Hence it is important not to distract the talker by looking at your watch, reading some book or newspaper or looking away from him. Moreover, you should give the talker the impression that you are listening to him to understand rather than to oppose.
4. 'Remove Distractions' : Certain activities like tapping with a pen or pencil, shuffling papers or passing something along distracts the talker.
5. 'Empathize with the Speaker' : True exchange of information can take place only if we place ourselves in the position of the talker.
6. 'Be Patient' : Patience pays, This saying holds good in every situation. We should give enough time to the talker. There are all kinds of talkers. Some get to the point very quickly, while some take a lot more time. So we must give the talker enough time to come to his point in his own way. We must not be tempted to interrupt.
7. 'Hold your Temper' : Anger is the worst enemy of communication as it builds walls among the participants in the communication event. It hardens their positions and blocks their minds to others' words.
8. 'Go Easy on Argument and Criticism' : As Dale Carnegie has very rightly said, you cannot win an argument. Argument and criticism do not reach anywhere. On the other hand, argument and criticism put the talker on the defensive and make him angry.
9. 'Ask Question' : Putting questions shows an open mind. It shows that you are listening. It shows that you are getting the message and also giving the feedback.
10. 'Stop Talking' : This is the last as well as the first commandment. All other commandments or rules of listening depend on it.

In this way we see that can improve our listening only through conscious effort. Here it is worth while to consider the role of silence in communication.

### Silence as Communication

Silence, by its very nature, communicates. It can also be deftly used to communicate. There is an old saying - "Silence is half consent". Yes, very often, especially in response to a request or a question regarding our opinion about something, we keep quiet. That serves the purpose. It shows our approach is positive. On the other hand, silence can also send out a negative signal. For example, if somebody ask us for a loan and we

keep quiet it will generally be considered as a negative response. If we want to help somebody we openly say so. Silence also shows our disinterestedness in something. Our interest in something or somebody freely comes to our lips and is evident through our eyes. Interest has an inbuilt element of excitement while lack of interest is best expressed through silence. And we also keep quiet to suppress our anger. A keen observer can easily make out our attitude and interpret our silence in such a situation.

Collective silence of workers in an office communicates a lot about their attitude to work and their culture. There is a world of difference between a place buzzing with raucous noises and one that has people working quietly. Working quietly shows satisfaction while making noises at work shows some discontent.

In a meeting or group discussion if somebody keeps quiet it is considered that he is mentally absent or probably not really interested in what is going on. It may also be interpreted as his ignorance of the matter being discussed. In the same way a candidate's silence in an interview betrays his ignorance.

Silence on the part of the audience at the time of a speech shows interest and participate listening. Speaking at such a time will distract the speaker and give a poor impression of the audience. That is why quite often we hear 'Silence please' ! In this way we see that silence is a multipronged communication tool and 'speaks' louder than words.

### Key Points

- (i) Speech comes before writing. Hence there is more oral communication than written.
- (ii) There is more informal oral communication than formal oral communication.
- (iii) There are various types of formal oral communications like face-to-face talking, oral presentations, interview etc.
- (iv) Oral communication has certain distinct advantages over written communication like immediate feedback, quickness of transmission etc.
- (v) Oral communication also has certain disadvantages like waste of time, lack of retention, lack of legal validity etc.
- (vi) Listening is very important to make oral communication effective.
- (vii) One has to make serious effort to become a good listener.
- (viii) Silence also communicates in different ways.

### PRACTICE EXERCISES

#### Very Short Answer Type Questions (With Answers)

##### 1. Fill in the blanks :

- (a) The inability to handle nouns is known as \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Human communication is often \_\_\_\_\_

- (c) Communication is associated with \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) The inability to comprehend the written word is known as \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e) The space where all our body movements can occur is called \_\_\_\_\_
- Ans. (a) Anomla (b) Non-verbal  
 (c) Human behaviour (d) Aloxia  
 (d) Intimate zone

2. What is linguistics ?

Ans. Linguistics is the scientific study of language, its structure, development and relationship with other language.

3. Define phonetics.

Ans. Phonetics is the study of spoken language related to speech sounds.

4. How signs are useful in communication ?

Ans. Signs are non-verbal units of expression. A natural sign is a physical indicator.

5. What are the three types of signs ?

Ans. The three types of signs are : An Icon, An Index and A symbol.

6. What does paralanguage refer to ?

Ans. Para language refers to a range of non-linguistic elements of speech, such as facial expression, gesture etc.

7. What do you understand by synchrony ?

Ans. Synchrony focuses on the amount of co-ordination in people's behaviour when their non-verbal ones are in relation with the another.

**Short Answer Type Questions (With Answers)**

1. What is role of appearance in communication ?

Ans. Appearance deals with the communication role played by a person's looks or physical appearance.

It deals with physical aspects of body shape, hair colour and skin tone as well as grooming, dress and use of body enhancement. Appearance speaks the personality views, dignity of a person.

2. Define the signs-Icon, Index and symbol.

Ans. An icon is a sign that resembles its referent object. For example, a photo identification is an icon of the person identified on the card.

An index is a sign that has causal relationship with its referent that is with some physical or presumed connection. For example smoke is an index or indicator of the presence of fire.

A symbol is a sign that is created arbitrarily with no specific relationship to its reference.

3. Write functions of silence.

Ans. Silence works for following purposes :

- It allows the speaker time to think

- It isolates oneself
- It hurts someone
- It communicates emotions

4. How can anybody communicate in silence ?

Ans. We do communicate with the help of silence. Sometimes we are so over pressured by emotions that we are not able to speak. Our silence speaks of our strong feelings. There are certainly many occasions when silence is more eloquent than words.

5. Write role of facial expression in communication.

Ans. Facial expressions show emotions, which originated in our evolutionary past. People irrespective of using different language and cultures use a common pattern of facial expression to show emotions.

6. Why should we be more conscious while communicating verbally ?

Ans. Oral communication with people is more difficult to handle than written communication. Some transactions can not be handled without face to face communication. We have to be alert while communicating orally otherwise it can lead to misunderstanding.

**Long Answer Type Questions (With Answers)**

1. What do you understand by communication psychology ?

Ans. By communication psychology we mean the study of human behaviour that affects the communication processes as well as communication that affects human behaviour. Most people do respond positively to messages that will meet their particular needs of particular times. In other words, our needs determine our reaction to the message. To be a successful communicator one should be able to determine the needs of the people to whom you are communicating furthermore, you should also be able to discern the affects of your communication through you body and language. The principles of communication psychology are as follows :

- Needs to determine behaviour in the communication process.
- Body language determines behavioural pattern.
- Verbal language determines behavioural pattern

2. How does language affects behaviour ?

Ans. The words we use can make us behave in different ways. To communicate successfully, we must remember that words are only symbols to which people add meaning. Two people may interpret the same word differently.

3. How can you handle oral communication ?

Ans. Oral communication with people from other cultures is more difficult to handle than written communication. Some transactions can not be handled without face to face communication. There are always chances of misunderstanding in oral communication. Be conscious of the non-verbal messages that you may be

sending or receiving. To overcome the barriers we can keep in mind following points:

- Keep an open mind. Don't stereo type that other person or react with preconceived ideas. Regard the person as an individual first.
  - Be conscious of other persons customs. Expect him or her to have different values, beliefs, expectations and manners.
  - Try to be aware of unintentional meaning of your words.
  - At the end of conversation, clarify with other person what has been said.
4. List some advantages and disadvantages of Oral communication.

Ans. Advantages of oral communication.

- It provides immediate feedback and clarification. People listening to speaker can ask questions, make comments and clarify.
- It builds up a healthy climate in the organization by bringing the senior closer to their subordinates.
- It is time saving. While a letter dictated and type, entered in the records and then posted takes a larger time. Oral Communication makes it immediately effective.
- It leads to a personal touch in the whole business. Resolving a conflict can not be possible in the absence of oral communication.
- It is very effective in interacting with groups. The speaker can immediately understand group's reaction and arrive at satisfactory conclusion.
- Oral communication is also economical both in terms of money and time. It saves money spent on stationery, postage etc.

Disadvantages of oral communication.

- It does not always save time and money. Quite often meetings go on without any result or agreement achieved.
- Effectiveness of oral communication depends mainly on the attitude of sender or the receiver of the message.
- Oral messages can not be retained for a long time.

Review Questions :

1. Why do we have more oral communication than written? Give reasons.
2. What do you mean by 'phatic communication'? Illustrate your answer with some examples.
3. What, according to you, are the three most important advantages of oral communication?
4. On one hand it is said that oral communication saves time, and on the other it is said that it wastes time. How and why does it happen? Discuss with some examples known to you.
5. Write a note on the importance of listening.

6. Why is it necessary to 'stop talking'?
7. Visualize a situation in which, in the midst of your speech, you are repeatedly interrupted by a listener. What effect will it have on the entire communication event?
8. Why is a listener advised to go easy on argument and criticism?
9. How does asking questions help a speaker/talker?
10. Write a note on silence as a means of communication.

□□□



## INTRODUCTION

An interview is an interaction between two or more persons for a specific purpose, in which the interviewer asks the interviewee specific questions in order to assess his/her suitability for recruitment, admission or promotion. In a simple manner interview is a conversation between two people. It is a face to face verbal exchange which endeavours to discover as much information as possible in the least amount of time. It can also be a meeting in which a journalist asks somebody questions to determine their opinions. Interviews are valuable conversation for both parties to see if the applicant fits comfortably into the company environment. Interviews play an important part in two-way communication.

Although the nature of interviews may be different for different organizations, several rules are common for all. For example, for any job interview, one needs to prepare, update one's resume, know the profile of the company, prepare answers for commonly asked questions etc. Here we will discuss how you can achieve success like adopting certain strategies before, during and after an interview, especially a job interview.

## PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES OF INTERVIEWS

Interviews may be conducted for various reasons. Generally interviews are conducted to achieve some of the following objectives :

- To select a person for specific task
- To monitor performance
- To collect information
- To exchange information
- To counsel

## ART OF INTERVIEWING

### • Plan the Interview :

Planning an interview is similar to planning any other form of communication. Interview begins by starting the purpose, analyzing the other person and formulating

## INTERVIEW

your main ideas. Then you decide on length, style and organization of the interview. The responsibility for planning the interview falls on the interviewer. Interview must be scheduled on the simplest level and it should be in a comfortable and convenient location. A set of interview questions must be set up and decided.

### • Organize an interview

For the interview to be purposeful it must be organized as a written document. Various types of questions are tools for developing ideas. Which should be arranged in a sequence that will enable you to accomplish your purpose. The following purposes may be solved by the interviewer.

### • Information purpose

Analytical or problem solving purpose organization that allows you to state the problem, review the background and objectives, suggest solutions, evaluate pros and cons of each identified best option and agree on implementation plans.

### • Taking interview is an art

An interviewer has more responsibility, has to be more careful than the interviewee. The responsibility to select the right candidate for the job is on his shoulders; therefore he has to create a comfortable, reliable and trustworthy environment in front of the interviewee so that real facts come out. Interviewer has to take care of the following things :

- **Arrogance** : It refers to overconfidence. The interviewer should not be very arrogant.
- **Apathy** : It refers to lack of enthusiasm or interest. The interviewer needs to be considerate for the candidate. Avoid a frozen or nil expression on your face. A smile on your face, eye contact, confident posture, timely gestures etc. convey that you are serious and enjoying the interview.

Skills and attributes most employers look after are as follows :

- **Technical skills** : The candidate's subject knowledge suitable for the post he/she has applied for.
- **Analytical skills** : The candidate's ability to examine and assess a situation.
- **Carrier objective** : The candidate's goals and aspirations-what the candidate wants to pursue.
- **Mental ability** : The candidate's ability to quickly grasp things/mental alertness.
- **Communication skills** : The candidate's skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- **Interpersonal skills** : The candidate's skills to build relationships with colleagues, seniors and subordinates and ability to move with team members.
- **Flexibility/adaptability** : The candidate's multi-tasking skills or ability to adopt himself/herself to the changing situations or environment and handle multiple concurrent projects.

- **Management/leadership skills** : The candidate's ability to plan, organize, motivate, inspire, manage and lead the colleagues to achieve the organizational goal.
- **Creativity** : The candidate's out of box thinking and ability to innovate.
- **Social skills** : The demeanour in public or with strangers/employers or how a person conducts with others. The way one meets and greets others.
- **Honesty and Integrity** : The candidate's honesty and worthiness.
- **Determination** : The candidate's ability to accomplish the given assignment despite several odds.

### Types of Interviews

Depending on the objective and nature, interviews can be categorized into the following types :

- Job
- Persuasive
- Evaluation
- Conflict Resolution
- Termination
- Information
- Exit
- Counselling
- Disciplinary
- Media

Each of the above type has a different approach.

#### • Job Interviews

The employer wants to learn about the applicant's abilities and experiences and the candidate wants to learn about the position on offer and the organization.

#### • Information Interviews

The interviewer seeks facts that bear on a decision or contribute to basic understanding. Information flows mainly in one direction.

#### • Persuasive Interviews

One person tells another about a new idea, product or service and explains why the other should act on his/her recommendations. These interviews are often associated with selling.

#### • Exit-Interviews

In this, the interviewer tries to understand why the interviewee is leaving the organization or transferring to another department or division. A departing employee can offer/provide insight into whether the business and human resource is being handled efficiently or whether there is a considerable scope for improvement.

#### • Evaluation Interviews

A supervisor periodically gives an employee feedback on his/her performance. The supervisor and the employee discuss progress towards predetermined standards or goals and evaluate areas that require improvement.

#### • Counselling Interviews

A supervisor takes with an employee about personal problems that are interfering with work performance. The interviewer is concerned with the welfare of both the employee and the organization. The goal is to establish the facts, convey the company's concern and steer the person towards a source of help.

#### • Conflict resolution interviews

In this interview two competing people or groups of people with opposite points of view explore their problem and attitudes. The goal is to bring the two parties closer together, cause adjustments in perceptions and attitudes and create a more productive climate.

#### • Disciplinary interviews

In this a supervisor tries to correct the behaviour of an employee who has ignored the organization rules and regulations. The interviewer tries to get the employee to see the reason for the rules and to agree to comply.

#### • Termination Interviews

A supervisor informs an employee of the reason for the termination of the latter's job.

#### • Media Interviews

All the media interviews are generally conducted to disseminate information to the public on the life style and achievements of an individual/business or on the new policies introduced by the government.

### ESSENTIAL FEATURES OR STAGES OF INTERVIEW

#### • Appraisal of resume :

Some companies may shortlist candidates on the basis of projects they have completed, specific courses they have done, internship. They have taken up etc.

#### • Tests :

Companies conduct aptitude tests (written/online) comprising sections such as technical, quantitative, verbal, reasoning, psychometric etc.

#### • Group discussions :

Most recruiters use this as the second stage after the aptitude test.

#### • Presentation :

A few companies may ask the candidate to present themselves in two or three minutes.

#### • Face to Face interview :

This may lead to final round of interview negotiations. This stage comes after the candidate has been selected. The company makes a job offer out to the candidate after discussing the candidate's expectations.

**STRUCTURE/THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS**

An interview consists of three distinct steps :

- Establishing rapport
- Closing
- Gathering Information
- Using body language effectively
- **Establishing rapport**

When you enter the room, look around and establish eye contact with the people there. Smile warmly and greet them. Shake hands with a firm grip. It requires, and set when invited to do so.

Interviewer will analyse you in reference to the company culture.

- **Information gathering :**

At this stage, the employers will ask questions and match your answers against their expectation.

Your honesty and sincerity in answering questions should be evident.

- **Closing :**

If your interview has been successful, there will usually be an indication of what to come is to come next.

**Guidelines for Interviewee**

The key to success in an interview is not one's experience, grades, extra curricular attitude, but one's attitude. To rise above others with better experience, grades or skills, a highly positive work attitude is required. There are various aspects for preparing for interview.

- **Preparation of resume :**

A resume is a written record of a candidate's education and past and present occupation, prepared when applying for a job.

- **Personal attributes :**

One needs to analyse one's own hard and soft skills, strengths weaknesses, attitude, likes and dislikes. Knowing yourself or introspecting your qualities and skills is a very important step in the preparation of your job interview.

- **Knowing the prospective employer**

You need to know that you wish to apply/have applied for. You can collect the information through the company website, annual report, brochures, news paper, magazines.

- **Awareness of job description :** The nature of the job should be understood thoroughly. You can get an idea about the job profile from the company website.

**Guidelines for Interviewer**

1. It is the prime most duty of interviewer to create a healthy, comfortable and relaxed environment for the interviewee.
2. No difficult or prompt questions should be asked in the beginning. An interview must start with an introduction, how did you come to know about this job, family background etc.
3. Resume itself reveals and describes the lacking part of candidate. If experience training, other skills are lacking. The interviewee should not be pin point that. After all he/she has been called after scrutinizing of resume. Moreover these days the candidate crosses through aptitude test and group discussion round for reaching up to the stage of interview that means the person has some substantial qualities.
4. Irrelevant questions should not be asked.
5. Clear, honest and truthful statements regarding the job, job description, rules and regulations, about organization should be told so that it becomes easy for the candidate to accept the terms and conditions.
6. Interviewer should not boast about the organization.

**PRACTICE EXERCISES****Very Short Answer Type Questions (With Answers)**

1. **What is Mock interview ?**  
**Ans. :** Mock interview is an opportunity to practise interviewing technique and answers line.
2. **Name the factors that can be responsible for the not selection of a candidate in interview.**  
**Ans.** Arrogance, Apathy, nervousness, over confidence, lack of confidence, lack of concentration and social skills.
3. **List some objectives of interview.**  
**Ans.**
  - To select a person for specific job.
  - To monitor performance.
  - To collect and exchange information
  - To counsel
4. **What is a campus interview ?**  
**Ans.** Campus interviews are the interview conducted at the campuses of colleges.
5. **What are on site interviews ?**  
**Ans.** On-site interview are the interviews conducted at company premises.
6. **What are telephonic interviews ?**  
**Ans.** Telephonic interviews are the interviews by the companies over the telephone.



## 7. What is face-to-face interview ?

Ans. A face-to-face interview for any job is a personal communication between the interview panel and interviewee.

**Short Answer Type Questions (With Answers)**

## 1. How campus interview is conducted ?

Ans. Campus interview are conducted at the campus of colleges. The companies inform the students well in advance through the placement department of the college that they would be visiting their campus to select students for job they deliver a presentation, the types of projects they carry out the selection mode etc.

## 2. How on site interviews are conducted ?

Ans. On-site interviews are conducted at company's premises. Many companies short list candidates after going through their resumes or talking to them over phones and call them to the company for a face-to-face interview.

## 3. How interview is conducted by video-conferencing ?

Ans. Many companies, specially MNC conduct video conferencing interview to select candidates for jobs. Generally for hiring for senior positions from other states or countries, this mode of interview may be used.

## 4. What should a candidate know about his prospective employer.

Ans. A candidate must know about-

- age of company
- services of products
- competitors
- growth pattern
- reputation/where it stands in the industry
- divisions and sub-divisions
- sales/assets/earnings
- on going projects
- mission/culture/values

## 5. What are the probable questions that you can ask the interviewer ?

Ans.

- Whom will I report to ?
- Whom will I be working with ?
- What training opportunities are there ?
- What promotional prospects are there ?
- When you will be making a final decision ?

**Long Answer Type Questions (With Answers)**

1. After a number of tests and interview. When the candidate is selected. He/she may not be that perfect. Justify this statement.

Ans. Unfortunately, there is not much correlation between interviewing well and actually doing the job well. For this reason, experts now advise that tests become a longer part of the interview process. Computers have been suggested to answer multiple-choice questions based on the job description and corporate style. Applicant tend to be more honest with a computer than with human interviewers when asked about such things as their goals and preferences.

However, interviews allow employees to decide, how a prospective employee fits into the company. Employment interviews may be the most intense and dynamic.

## 2. Write the points of preparation for attending the interview.

Ans. You should give positive clues to the interviewer such as-punctuality, neat physical appearance, cheerful expression, pleased manners, presence of mind, positive attitude and clear and confident voice. Some more points are as follows :

- Be brief and spontaneous in your response
- Support your views with nature and rational arguments
- Be honest in referring to events, situations and experiences.
- Listen carefully to the interviewer's questions, statements and comments.
- Speak in a conversational style.
- Exhibit-outmost courtesy both in manners and speech.
- Do not give excessive details.
- Avoid long pauses while speaking.
- Do not keep smiling all the time.
- Do not make any dis-respectful remarks of people with whom you have worked.

■■■

## Chapter

# 9

## Art of Listening

*"If speaking is silver, listening is gold".*

### INTRODUCTION

Rose, Siddharth, Ishita, and Dushyant attended an expert lecture on 'Soft Skills for Entrepreneurs' delivered by Paul Kimura, a Management Guru. While talking about the role of IQ and EQ he said, 'IQ represents abstract intelligence which gets the entrepreneurs started, whereas EQ helps them become successful. After the lecture, Ishita shared the idea that the statement is applicable in every field of life; Siddharth endorsed the idea and told them that besides IQ and EQ, HQ (Health Quotient) is also becoming very essential, and he referred to an article that he had read in the open page of The Hindu sometime back. Rose remarked that she had found the lecture quite boring, and that she had in fact dozed off for a while. Dushyant said, I do not even know what you are talking about.

You can see that though all the four attended the same talk, only two of them paid attention to the speaker and listened carefully, whereas the other two did not listen to the speaker at all. In other words, they just faked listening. This is a very common problem. Have you ever pondered why it happens?

Listening is an everyday affair. Despite that, or probably owing to that, many of us shirk listening. In fact, most listeners see listening as a challenging task, so much so that the greatest challenge that a speaker faces is to make his/her speech worth listening to. In other words, when a speaker envisages his/her speech making endeavour, he/she grows increasingly obsessed with the idea of making his/her speech interesting. This is simply because if he/she does not make his/her speech engrossing enough, he/she will be listened to. After all, isn't it very common to react the way Rose did?

Many a time, we find listeners yawning, much to the anguish of the speakers who go out of their way to keep their audiences engaged. To keep the listeners attentive to their speech, most speakers use a variety of tactics. And yet, some of the listeners emerge from the lecture theatre declaring, 'It was quite boring, I dozed off.' Some others keep themselves completely away from the task of listening by mocking their fellow listeners saying, 'I don't know what you are talking about.' Now, why does it happen?

## ART OF LISTENING

### LISTENING IS AN ART

Research corroborates the view that human beings spend more time in listening than speaking. It is a skill mostly used by all of us, but we get little training in this. On the other hand, right from our school days, we are formally trained in all the other three language skills, namely speaking, reading, and writing. It is primarily so because it is usually taken for granted. It is presumed that by making a child sit while being spoken to, we can also make him/her listen. So, the child sits, but does not listen to the teacher or the parent. While attending a lecture or talk, some of the listeners just turn out, or get caught up in internal dialogue trying to translate a specific word, or think of something more interesting happening somewhere else outside the room.

However, it is not just psychology that makes way for such lack of interest in listening activity. Research has established that human beings can speak at the rate of about 125-150 words per minute, whereas human brains can process 500-700 words per minute. This means that we are able to use just 25 percent of our mind power and 75 percent is left unused while we listen to others. Consequently, most of us are more interested in speaking than listening to other. So in the name of listening what people do most of the time is hearing. Are these two different from each other? Of course. Let us see how these two can be distinguished.

### LISTENING V/s HEARING

Hearing takes place when something disturbs the atmosphere, and that disturbance take the form of pressure waves that strike our eardrums as sound. For example, a truck rolling by on the road in front of our house would be just heard and not listened to.

Listening is different. It expands when we pay attention to the meaning of what we hear. Therefore, listening is all about consciously, actively and systematically processing information. Listening demands perfect coordination between the ears and the brain, which result in decoding the speaker's message aptly. Regular practice and consistency are required if we want to improve our listening skills.

Effective listening is a dynamic activity that seeks out the meaning intended in message, considers their motivation, evaluates of soundness of their reasoning and the reliability of their supporting material, calculates the value and risk of accepting their recommendations, and integrates them creatively into the world of the listener.

Thus we quite often merely hear the word someone else speaks. These are just vibrations in the atmosphere. We nod, smile, perhaps even respond, but do we listen to the speakers around us? Hardly. Listening requires us to be open to the meaning of the other person's words. It is no longer just about sound but about the thoughts, feelings, and his or her ideas.

Now let us identify the major differences between a poor and a good listener.

**POOR LISTENING V/s EFFECTIVE LISTENING**

The major difference between a poor listener and effective listener are as follows.

Poor Listener	Effective Listener
Either tries to blame the speaker or considers the subject to be dry.	Think and mentally summarizes, listens between the lines to the tone of voice and evidence.
Gets distracted easily.	Fights against distractions and knows how to concentrate.
Finds it difficult to listen to complex material; has the tendency to read light and recreational materials.	Keeps listening on a regular basis; not averse to listening to matter which requires critical listening.
Tends to enter into unnecessary arguments.	Takes notes and organizes important information.
Resists new ideas.	Listens for ideas.
Pay too much attention to appearance and delivery.	Pays attention to the body language, tone and style along with the message being conveyed by the speaker.
Waits for his/her turn to speak.	Patiently listens to the speakers and responds as and when required.

**IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT LISTENING**

Here are a few important facts about listening :

1. Listening is not automatic.
2. It requires practice.
3. It demands intention.
4. The rewards are immediate if one truly listens.

**ADVANTAGES OF GOOD LISTENING**

Following are the advantages of good listening.

1. We generally find that good listeners are better performers. Thus, listening clearly differentiates between a poor and a good performer.
2. Listening is a vital skill which helps our learning. Good listening ability increases knowledge, develops critical thinking, and broadens opportunities.
3. Listening skills help us build effective relationship in our personal as well as professional life.
4. It prevents miscommunication.
5. It also facilitates solving problems in our personal life and at workplace.

6. Effective listening helps in sharing emotions, ideas, and experiences.
7. Good listening also improves decision-making and critical thinking.

**PROCESS OF LISTENING**

Although listening is considered a passive process but actually, it is a highly active process, because in order to be a part of it you need to be extremely active and alert. In fact, becoming a good listener requires us to understand how listening happens. Essentially in cognitive process, listening involves the following stages.

- **Sensing** At this stage, the listener has physical hearing of the message because the sound waves fall on the eardrum, as a result of which he/she perceives the sounds.
- **Recognizing** After hearing the physical sounds, the listener identifies and recognizes the pattern of sounds. After this, sounds are recognized in a specific context. Here, the listener makes a conscious effort to recognize the word symbols that he/she hears.
- **Interpreting** Now the listener starts decoding the message. As he/she listens, he/she employs his/her own values, beliefs, needs, ideas, etc. to interpret the speaker's message. Since he/she also pays attention to non-verbal message, the accuracy of his/her interpretation of the message also increases.
- **Evaluating** After he/she understands what the message actually means, he/she critically evaluates it. He/she assesses its strengths and weaknesses, its accuracy, reliability, and feasibility.
- **Responding** At this stage, the listener is ready to respond and react. He/she shows his/her rejection or acceptance, understanding or confusion, even indifference through his/her non-verbal cues.
- **Remembering or memorizing** This is the final stage of listening. Good listening enables the listener to retain the information for future reference. In order to increase the retention, you need to make conscious efforts by taking down proper notes, organizing the matter sequentially, or retaining the information by using analogies or other associated visual symbols.

**TYPES OF LISTENING**

In order to improve your listening ability, it is advisable to know the different types of listening that we need to employ on different occasions.

**Content listening** In this type of listening, the primary focus is on understanding the message sent by speaker. Most of the time, we use this type of listening to gather and understand the information. Therefore, it is also known as informative listening. We listen to reports, briefings, instructions, speeches, and conversations to obtain the desired information.

- **Empathetic listening** This is also known as therapeutic/relationship listening for the obvious reason that is used in times of crisis. This is mostly done by us when we allow a troubled friend to express his/her feeling. It does not mean that empathetic listening is not employed by professionals. In fact, good leaders and managers always try to empathize with their subordinates when they approach them with some problem. Counsellors, doctors, and psychiatrists also use this type of listening in their profession. In this type of listening, the listener is required to empathize with the speaker and help him/her get things off his/her chest. Since you try to understand the speaker's situation as an empathetic listener, it helps in strengthening the relationship between you and the speaker.
  - **Appreciative listening** you do not employ content listening or empathetic listening when you listen to music or watch a movie. In these situations, you use appreciative listening since you appreciate the lyrics, direction, melody, style, or dialogue delivery. Thus, it is listening for pleasure or enjoyment.
  - **Analytical listening** The purpose of this listening is two-fold. On one hand, you try to absorb the message and on the other, you attempt to analyse the ideas or facts and make critical judgement. In fact, this type of listening helps you evaluate the strength of argument, accuracy of evidence or facts, validity of inferences and gaps in thinking. Thus, this kind of listening particularly helps you become a good professional.
- Although all the skills referred to so far will help you evolve as a good listener, for the purpose of acquiring language skills, you need to pay special attention to intensive and extensive listening.

### INTENSIVE LISTENING V/s EXTENSIVE LISTENING

Intensive listening is listening to a small amount of material a number of times. For example, when you listen to a recorded lesson again and again, you may be able to acquire the correct pronunciation or intonation, or understand the hidden meaning of the text. When you listen, you concentrate and keep your mind focused on the text. This is the perfect technique to improve your listening comprehension. This helps you develop an inactive feel of the grammar, structure, and words of the language which you listen to in this type of repeated listening. By regularly listening to the news in English, audio articles, audio books, movie scenes, speeches, etc., you can easily develop your intensive listening. When your teacher plays a cassette in the classroom and expects you to understand what you hear, it is nothing but intensive listening. By adopting this pattern, you pick up a large number of important words, expressions, and sentence structures in a very natural manner.

However, you will take a lot of time to learn the language by using this technique. So you also require extensive listening in order to learn a language. It gives you the opportunity to hear different voices and styles. Thus, it helps you get used to natural

flow of language. This also helps in developing effortless listening, since listeners listen to the ideas and opinions on a wide range of topics. However, when listeners employ only extensive listening, they passively pick up the erroneous expressions with the correct ones and make the same errors when they themselves speak and write. That is why, we are required to employ both intensive and extensive listening in our day-to-day interactions with others.

### BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE LISTENING

This is very creative, interactive, and interpretive process. At times, however, it fails to click as some barrier may block the process. Here, we will discuss various barriers that impede us from being good listeners. If you recognize that you have some/any of these problems, make an effort to correct them.

#### Forged Attention

This is one of the most common barriers to effective listening. We usually find audiences staring at the speaker but their minds are preoccupied with something else. They have a very attentive listening posture with their hands below their chins and eyes wide open, but they are not listening at that point of time, only faking it. All of us have faked listening at some point or the other. However, faking is a poor listening habit and we should avoid it.

#### Premature Evaluation of the Subject Matter and Speaker

We often find that poor listeners convince themselves that the topic is uninteresting even before listening to the speaker and the complete message, and thereby a chain of negative thoughts start mushrooming. The next preconceived notion is that the speaker is dull and boring, and finally they turn to many other thoughts and concerns stored in their minds for such an occasion. Such listeners tend to mentally criticize the speaker for not speaking distinctly, for talking too softly, or for not looking at the audience. They often do the same with the speaker's appearance. If speakers are not dressed as they should be, they probably tend not to listen. On the other hand, good listeners try to get something good even out of a dull discussion or talk.

So, in order to overcome this poor listening habit, you need to suspend your judgement until you have listened to the speaker completely. Things which may seem dull or uninteresting initially may turn out to be interesting and useful later on.

#### Hard Listening

Poor listeners try very hard to listen to and absorb every word the speaker uses. Such type of listening is called hard listening. By employing this, listeners lose sight of the idea by concentrating too hard on details. In such cases, the listeners pay more heed to the individual words and expressions rather than concentrating on the actual essence of the message. Thus, most of us who listen for facts may recall some isolated facts. But may miss the primary thrust or idea the speaker was trying to convey. Remember that in order to overcome the problem, we must listen to the speaker's

primary points.

### Poor Interpersonal Relations

Human beings base their reactions on the type of relationship they have with the other person. The same happens in the case of poor listeners. They interpret the message according to their past or present relation with the speaker. A lack of confidence, or a sense of superiority or inferiority, prevents them from having proper involvement in the listening task. These prejudices affect the sense, interpretation, and evaluation of the message. Thus, this attitude of the listeners obstruct them from getting the entire message.

### Over Excitement :

Whenever we hear something with which we happen to disagree, we get swayed by a chain of thought related to that. We spend too much time on thinking about the counter arguments and we tend to lose track of the speaker's ideas. In such cases, our listening efficiency drops to nearly zero because of over-excitement.

So, listen to the speaker's ideas with controlled emotions and judge him/her later.

### Different Language Variety and Accent :

When the speaker uses a different account which the audience is unable to understand, it becomes a great barrier to listening. For instance, the Indian audience can follow the British accent easily, whereas when they listen to a speaker from California who has an American accent, they find it difficult to follow him/her.

Since the message of a speech is all important, what you can do as students is to get some ear training for the American accent too.

### Distractions :

Some listeners have very poor concentration while listening. They actually get distracted even with the slightest sounds of opening and closing of door, people whispering to each other, or vehicles outside.

How can we overcome this? As listeners, we should concentrate on the message rather than these distractions, as these are not under our control.

### Evading the Difficult Types

We have a tendency to listen to whatever is easy and familiar, and avoid whatever seems to be difficult and unfamiliar. Poor listeners become easy victims of this in classrooms, meetings, interviews, or group discussion. This in turn leads to poor or inadequate performance.

So, to combat this problem, we should tell ourselves that we must listen to all sorts of topics and all types of speakers. In order to help us achieve our goal, what we have to do is to train ourselves; and for that, we should develop enough patience to listen.

### Non-attentive State of Mind

The listener often fail to listen to the speaker's message because he/she is preoccupied with certain thoughts, or is tense or exhausted. He/she may be anxious or perturbed

due to some reason. Various other distractions, such as hunger or drowsiness, and some other discomforts of a similar sort, can stop him/her from being attentive while listening. Thus, the closed mind becomes a major barrier to listening.

This problem demands a readiness or willingness on the part of the listener for proper comprehension of the information being delivered.

### Poor Listening Leads to Poor Learning.

### Different Levels of Perception

The speaker at time presumes that all his/her listening have the same level of understanding that he/she enjoys, which leads to information legendary, or at times complex information, which may not be easily comprehended by the listeners. It is likely that the listener with a lower level of understanding could then face a problem in decoding the message aptly, and the intelligent listener may find it reluctant and not pay proper attention to what the speaker says.

Now, let us see how we can develop better listening skills.

### FIVE STEPS TO ACTIVE LISTENING

Following are the five step that will help us develop active listening skills;

1. Look the speaker in the eyes as far as possible, or follow his/her movements.
2. Summarize what the speaker is saying.
3. Take down notes.
4. Link what you are listening to what you already know.
5. Ask and answer questions in your mind for clarity in your understanding regarding the problem under discussion.

### TECHNIQUES FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Following are the important techniques for effective listening:

1. To improve your listening skills, you should have an open mind.  
You should sit alert and look at the speaker with a view to establish your interest in him/her.
2. The effectiveness of listening generally depends on the intensity of the interest taken. So, take interest in the discussion or talk.
3. Do not prejudge the speaker, or his/her message, until you have listened to it completely.
4. Employ your critical thought while you are listening.
5. Stop talking and do not interrupt the speaker unnecessarily.
6. Observe the non-verbal clues of the speaker, as this will enable you to grasp the message completely.
7. Take advantage of the lag time that we get in terms of small pauses between

two different ideas.

8. Ask relevant questions to yourself, so that you keep on track with the ideas presented by the speaker.
9. Take down notes or paraphrase the message in simple words. This will certainly enable you to grasp it quicker.

### PRACTICE EXERCISES

#### Very Short Answer Type Questions (With Answers)

1. **How you can say that listening is an art ?**  
 Ans. : Human beings spend more time in listening than speaking. It is used by all of us but we get little training in this.
2. **Why we are more interested in speaking than listening ?**  
 Ans. Human beings can speak at the rate of about 125-150 words per minute whereas brain process 500-700 words per minute. Consequently we are more interested in speaking than listening to others.
3. **How listening is different from hearing?**  
 Ans. Listening demands perfect coordination between the ears and the brain, which result in decoding the speaker's message aptly.
4. **Name two major types of listening.**  
 Ans. Extensive listening and intensive listening.
5. **How inadequate language can be reason for poor listening ?**  
 Ans. Certain words that speaker uses may not make sense to the listener. Then it will result in poor listening.

#### Short Answer Type Questions (With Answers)

1. **How does listening take place ?**  
 Ans. Hearing depends on ears. While listening uses the mind and eyes as well. The ear permits you to hear sounds. The mind enables you to interpret these sounds to recognize some of them as words and to fashion the words into thoughts and ideas.
2. **How listening actually is vital to oral communication ?**  
 Ans. In a conversation both the speaker and the listener have to listen simultaneously to each other for the communication to be effective. The speaker has to listen not only to any verbal responses but also to the non verbal symbol or signs that the listener displays. Based on that the speaker has to determine from moment to moment what to say and what non-verbal signs to display with the words.
3. **Why is that our listening is not as good as it ought to be ?**  
 Ans. Our brain is capable of processing 500 to 700 words a minute while people speak only 120-150 words a minute. The listener use only a part of their brain to listen, they use their brain spare capacity to think of other things that interest them.

#### 4. How can you develop listening skills?

- Ans. Good listener are made, not born.
- If your emotions are high give them up.
  - Denote time and effort to try to understand what the speaker is speaking.
  - Maintain an open minded attitude.
  - Maintain eye contact.

#### 5. Write some steps to effective listening skills.

- Ans.
- State your intention to listen
  - Manage the physical environment.
  - Make an internal communication to listen.
  - Assume a listening posture.
  - Participate actively in listening process.

#### Long Answer Type Questions (With Answers)

##### 1. Explain how you will develop the listening skills.

Ans. For effective listening skill one has to develop a listening virtual. Making an audible announcement of your willingness creates an environment of respect and dignity and helps your communicating partner realise their message is welcomed. Managing the physical environment means cleaning all that is lying on your desk or table may cause any kind of distraction. We can not remove/cut listening distraction, but we can surely eliminate the physical distraction around us. This would help in increasing your awareness.

Making intenal commitment to listen is far the most important step in being an effective listener.

In addition to managing the physical environment, you must manage your physical readiness to listen. The non verbal messages that you send via your body could encourage, inhibit them.

##### 2. State the ineffective listening styles.

Ans. There are at least four ineffective styles of listening as follows :

- The "missing-in-action" listener.
- The "distracted" listener
- The "Selective" listener
- The "Contentious" listener

You could become a "missing-in-action" listener if you have little interest in what is being said to you. It is a though the communication does not exist. It is not the question of misunderstanding the communication, you just dont hear it. A person might go missing in action if they feel unable to understand a complex message. The "Distracted" listening is a functional style of listening, when someone is listening while reading, writing or pursuing some other activity common behaviour of

distracted listener is to repeatedly glance at the watch. This indicates impatience. One can become a distracted listener when one is under pressure, stress or unwilling or unable to show down your thought.

In the "Selective" style of listening, the listener listens only what he wants to listen. It can be either positively or negatively included.

A "contentious" listener is one who uses a combat or negatively aggressive listening style. These listeners are always on a war path and listen only to find points of disagreement. They listen only to reject. They are determined to disagree emotions such as fear, anger, jealousy often result in combative listening patterns.

■■■

