

2

CHAPTER

COMMUNICATION

A QUICK REVIEW

CONCEPT OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Topic	Explanation
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The word ‘communicate’ has been derived from the Latin word ‘Communis’, which means to ‘share’.◆ Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behaviour.◆ There must be at least two persons to allow the completion of the process. One takes up the role of a sender the other that of the receiver.◆ Communication is an indispensable element in ensuring efficient proliferation of ideas, views, suggestions, thoughts, grievances, plans, policies, programmes, procedures, etc.◆ In absence of effective communication in an organisation, there may be chaos and conflicts among the human capital thereby affecting the productivity of the organisation.◆ For building a conducive work environment, communication plays a significant role.
Definitions	<p><i>“Communication in its simplest form of conveying of information from one person to another.”</i> <i>Hudson</i></p> <p><i>“Communication is the transfer of information from one person to another whether or not it elicits confidence.”</i> <i>Koontz and O’Donell</i></p> <p><i>“Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons.”</i> <i>George Terry</i></p> <p><i>“Communication is the sum of all things, one person does when he wants to create understanding in the mind of another. It is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding.”</i> <i>Allen Louis</i></p>

Topic	Explanation
Significance of Communication	<p>An organisation having a robust communication structure can attain astral heights. The following points can illustrate the importance of communication in human resource management:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Base for Action: Communication acts as a base for any action. Starting of any activity begins with communication which brings information necessary to begin with. 2. Planning Becomes Easy: Communication facilitates planning. Information regarding the human resource requirement of each department of the organisation with their qualifications, the type and kinds of job etc. can be collected through communication. Policies and programmes for their acquisition can be prepared and implemented. 3. Means of Coordination: Communication is an important tool for coordinating the efforts of various people at work in the organisation. 4. Aids in Decision-Making: The information collected through communication aids in decision-making. Communication facilitates access to the vital information required to take decisions. 5. Provides Effective Leadership: An effective communication skill helps a manager to exchange ideas with his subordinates, gets to know their opinions, seeks advices and make decisions. This enables a manager to win confidence of his subordinates through constantly communicating with them and removing probable misunderstandings. In this way he leads his people to accomplish the organisational goal. 6. Boosts Morale and Motivation: An effective communication system in stills confidence among subordinates and workers ensuring change in their attitude and behaviour.
Communication Strategy Framework	<p>A communication strategy framework clarifies how businesses should communicate with their employees, investors, customers, and suppliers. Some of the key elements of an effective communication strategy are purpose, background, objectives, target audience, messaging, and approach.</p>
Business communication	<p>Business communication is the process of exchanging ideas, opinions, and information within and outside the business environment to achieve business goals.</p> <p><i>“Communication is an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>W. H. Newman and C. F. Summer</i></p> <p><i>“Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages. However, communication is effective only when the message is understood and when it stimulates action or encourages the receiver to think in new ways.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>C. L. Bovee, J. V. Thill, and B. E. Schatzman</i></p>

Topic	Explanation
	<p><i>"Business communication is a communication made within a business organization in order to solve problems and make decisions."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Curtis</i></p>
<p>Reasons Why Business Communication is Important</p>	<p>Business communication is an important factor because of the following:—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helps in increasing productivity: Effective business communication increases the productivity of staff by boosting up teamwork. It creates a trustworthy and understanding environment among employers and employees. The scope of doing mistakes or errors during their work minimizes due to effective communication. 2. Helps in increasing customers: An effective business communication can facilitate in attracting new customers and retain the current customers. 3. Enhances business partnerships: Business Communication also improves partnerships in business. It plays a significant role in dealing with external business clients or vendors. Also, an effective and harmonious relationship with other businesses determines the further success of an organization. 4. Facilitates innovations in business: Effective business communication helps in business innovations as well as it facilitates employees to convey their ideas and suggestions openly. 5. Information exchange: Business communication is required by an organization for exchanging information with internal and external stakeholders. This helps in achieving its goals effectively. 6. Preparation of plans and policies: Through effective business communication, organizations can make their plans and policies properly. Through communication, different managers source relevant information through reliable channels.
<p>Types of Business Communication</p>	<p>Following are the types of business communication in any organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Internal Business Communication ◆ Horizontal/Lateral Business Communication ◆ External Business Communication
<p>Internal Business Communication</p>	<p>This type of communication occurs within the members of the organization. This communication includes both formal and informal communication. Internal communication should be effective as it is a vital source of viewing and representing organizational issues.</p>

Topic	Explanation
	<p>Effective internal business communication may increase job satisfaction level, productivity, the efficiency of employees by decreasing their turnover and grievances and helps in increasing profits.</p> <p>Internal Business Communication can be divided into two types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Internal (Upward) Communication (b) Internal (Downward) Communication
Internal (Upward) Communication	<p>This type of internal communication involves bottom to top management approach. Here, the information flows from subordinates to managers or any person that is on the upper in the hierarchy level.</p> <p>Following are the characteristics of upward internal business communication include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ It includes bottom to top approach <i>i.e.</i> subordinates to superiors. ◆ Its nature is participative. ◆ The main purpose is to provide timely feedback, suggestions, making requests, escalating any issues or concerns, etc. to superiors. ◆ The flow of information is from the lower level to the upper level.
Internal (Downward) Communication	<p>The process of downward communication in business includes passing on messages from the top level to the lower level through the chain of hierarchy. This information is related to passing on instructions to subordinates or employees to do their respective tasks.</p> <p>Downward communication is being used by managers to communicate different goals, procedures and policies, guidelines, decisions, instructions, etc. to their subordinates. Eg. new rules and regulations in the work area that need to be carried out in routine activities, change in timings etc.</p> <p>This type of communication can be in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Oral form: face-to-face conversations, telephonic communication, meetings, etc. ◆ Written form: different notices, manuals, news display in electronic form, etc. <p>Following are the characteristics of downward internal business communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ It includes top to bottom approach <i>i.e.</i> superiors to subordinates. ◆ Its nature is directive. ◆ Main purpose is to communicate organizational objective, plans and procedures, instructions, etc. to subordinates. ◆ The flow of the information is from the upper level to the lower level.

Topic	Explanation
Horizontal/Lateral Business Communication	<p>Lateral or horizontal communication is related to communication among co-workers <i>i.e.</i> either verbal communication or written communication.</p> <p>This may include inter-departmental communication or communication between cross-departments and can be between people of the same or similar rank in a company.</p> <p>For example, the Marketing head of an organization is supposed to communicate about market trends, customer needs and expectations, product demand scenario, etc. to a production head for production of products accordingly.</p>
External Business Communication	<p>Communications with people who are external to the organization e.g. customers or shareholders or suppliers or partners or regulatory bodies, etc. Following are the benefits of external business communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ It facilitates increasing sales volume. ◆ Gives rise to effective operations. ◆ Leads to an increase in profits of organization, etc. ◆ Resulting in increasing corporate image, goodwill and overall performance of the organization by achieving its goals and customer satisfaction.
Methods of Communication for Business	<p>Following are the standard methods of communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Verbal communication: Verbal communication is the use of language to transfer information through speaking or sign language, including active listening. E.g. virtual meetings, phone calls and in-person conversations. ◆ Non-verbal communication: Non-verbal communication is the use of gestures, facial expressions and other non-verbal cues to convey information to others. E.g. smiling or frowning, crossing your arms and nodding. ◆ Written communication: Organisations may deliver written communication through print or digital media. E.g. emails, business letters, memos, reports and other documentation that clients read to learn about a brand or materials that employees share with each other to relay important information. ◆ Visual communication: Use of images and graphics to convey information. E.g. charts, maps, infographics and videos.
Process of Communication	<p>Communication is a dynamic process that involves transmitting information from the sender to the receiver through a channel which in turn gives the feedback in the form of some message within a given time frame.</p> <p>Following is the process of communication:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sender: The first person who initiates the communication by sending the encoded message to the receiver is known as the sender and is responsible for the transmission of the correct information.

Topic	Explanation
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Encoding: The sender encodes the message in the form of certain words or some certain symbols, body language, some signs or gestures to translate the information into a message. The way the sender encodes the message denotes the perception, background, competencies, skills, or knowledge of the sender. 3. Message: After the message is encoded it is formed into a message by the sender to be further conveyed to the receiver. The message can be oral, written, verbal, graphs, gestures, signs, mood, sound, etc. 4. Communication Channel: The sender then chooses the channel or medium through which the information will be conveyed to the receiver or recipient. The channel may be oral, written, verbal, internet, web, gestures, signs, symbols, newspapers, etc. 5. Receiver: The person for whom the message is intended is known as the receiver or recipient. 6. Decoding: Decoding is done by the receiver to interpret the message in the correct means in which it is intended. 7. Feedback: The feedback intends that the sender has sent the right message and the receiver has received and decoded the right message and understood that in the best possible way. Feedback is necessary as it increases the efficiency and permits the encoder to know the efficacy of the message.
Means of Communication	<p>Following are the Means of Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Verbal Communication or spoken communication: This can be done by means of direct face-to-face contact, telephonic conversation, television, FM radio, and any other means of verbal or spoken communication. ◆ Non-Verbal Communication: This includes the body gestures which a person makes, how a person is dressed up for a particular thing like dance, drama, thriller, etc. The tonal expressions or the mood of a person are also an example of non-verbal communication. ◆ Written Communication: This includes writing letters to someone for conveying the message, sending proposals or postcards to communicate. Internet or web writings is also another kind of written communication. ◆ Visualizations Communication: This can be established between the sender and the receiver via visuals like pictorial representations and graphs etc. To communicate something related to stats or data and to make some kind of analysis, communication through visuals helps.
Verbal Communication	<p>Following are the characteristics of Verbal communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ability to Motivate: Works well to motivate and convince people.

Topic	Explanation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Personal and/or confidential discussions: Works well for personal discussions like bouncing off an idea. Or can be used well with 1 to few people Suited well for confidential communication. ◆ Natural & Easy: After non-verbal communication, verbal communication is the next one that is picked up before one learns to write. Hence, it comes more naturally and easily than written communication. ◆ Transient and not reusable: The whole communication cannot be reused or transferred to another person without additional repetition. Hence, it is not scalable if there is a need that others need to be included into the conversation or even at the least to be informed. ◆ Unstructured or semi-structured: Provides scope to keep the conversation open ended and evolve as the conversation proceeds. ◆ Synchronous: It goes without saying that the people involved have to be there at the same time. Multi geography teams are becoming the norm rather than the exception. This can be a challenge if relied upon a lot. ◆ Visual augmentation: When the communication needs to be augmented with visual cues, whether it is empathy or urgency etc., it is possible to do that. <p><i>“Words convey only seven per cent of our message, while the rest of communication occurs through our tone, volume, facial expressions, gestures, posture and the like 93 per cent of communication is nonverbal.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Research by Dr. Albert Mehrabian</i></p>
Written Communication	<p>Following are the characteristics of written communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1 to Many: Write once and read multiple times. ◆ Structured: Written communication infuses some amount of structure into the communication. ◆ Asynchronous: The communicator and communicated do not have to be online at the same time. This can be a huge differentiator with geographically distributed teams. ◆ It enables people to work in parallel. ◆ It makes people independent. ◆ Random Access pattern: It can account for varying levels of interest in the topic. E.g. one person may be interested only in the high level objectives and overall flow, while others are interested in the complete details. Both types of people can efficiently process the document. ◆ Referenceable: Both verbal and written communication can refer to other written documents. While it is possible to refer to verbal communications to some extent, it is not as efficient and simple.

Topic	Explanation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Referable: When there is some loss of information from the original state, the written document can be referred again to set the information back to its original state. ◆ Durable: Similar to the ACID properties of a database, written information is durable. Whatever it is, it will remain the same over time or as it is transferred. ◆ Lots of details: When there are lots of details, written mode serves the purpose well. ◆ Combinations of some of these characteristics: As an example, Random Access Pattern and Referenceable can be a combined requirement. <p><i>"I write because I don't know what I think until I read what I say."</i> <i>Flannery O'Connor</i></p> <p><i>"The act of writing is itself the goal, and not just the final artifact"</i> <i>"High output management" by Andy Grove</i></p>
Hybrid - Written and Verbal Communication both	<p>Following are the characteristics of a Hybrid mode of communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Complex information: With complex information, just verbal or written usually does not suffice. A hybrid mode suits this well. ◆ Discussion: Discussions are possible in a verbal mode also. The Structured attribute of written communication provides a nice foundation to have an efficient discussion on. Once the written form is discussed, there can be changes that need to be made to the document.
Silent Communication	<p>In keeping with our analytical reasoning, silent communication can be considered as communication where there is 0 information transferred.</p>
Challenge & Solution	<p>Following are the challenges in opting the preferred mode of communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of time in the short term to pick the preferred communication method: If we choose verbal communication over written. All the advantages of the preferred method such as consistency, efficiency and durability are lost till the preferred method is done. ◆ Preferred method may never be done, or when done is not as rich as it would have been done earlier. <p>Therefore, one should find the right balance, and attempt to choose the preferred method only.</p>
Tasks, Audiences & Suggested mode	<p>Following are a few product development processes and their preferred modes of communication:</p> <p>Product Vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Audience: Entire team associated with the product ◆ Characteristics needed: Motivate, 1 to Many, Semi-Structured, Synchronous, Asynchronous, Referenceable, Referable, Durable

Topic	Explanation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Suggested mode: Hybrid mode of written down vision + verbal delivery ◆ Powered by the persuasive & synchronous verbal communication ◆ Written communication will be referenceable, referable and durable in an asynchronous manner <p>Product Backlog:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Audience: UX, Dev, Qa, Documentation teams. Other Product managers and stakeholders, Future members of the above groups ◆ Characteristics: 1 to Many, Structured, Asynchronous, Random Access, Referenceable, Referable, Durable, Lots of details ◆ Suggested mode: Written ◆ Discussions will be based on the written artifacts. It is different from the hybrid mode above in which the outline is written down, and the messaging is spoken. <p>This task requires all the characteristics of written communication and hence is a natural fit.</p> <p>Technology Architecture/Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Audience: Current and Future Developers, QA, Devops, Product, Support functions ◆ Characteristics needed: 1 to Many, Structured, Asynchronous, Random Access, Referenceable, Referable, Durable, Lots of details, Complex information, Discussion ◆ Suggested mode: Written ◆ Similar to the roadmap, there will be discussions that follow the written documents. <p>Software code documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Audience: Current & Future Developers, QA, Support teams ◆ Characteristics needed - 1 to Many, Asynchronous, Referable, Durable ◆ Suggested mode: Written. The challenge is that sometimes Silent Communication is present. However, the audience and the characteristics necessitates that the silent communication should not be chosen in this case.
<p>Communication Networks-vertical, circuit, chain, wheel, star</p>	<p>Following are the various types of Communication Network:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vertical Network: The communication which passes from one person or process to another person or process in a vertical pattern is called Vertical Network. It can happen either in the top to bottom or bottom to top format. This communication provides an immediate response as the receiver receives the information faster than any other network. We can call this network as a formal network. The best example is the communication between top level and bottom level employees. Miscommunication does not happen in this network as this is a type of direct communication.

Topic	Explanation
	<p>2. Circuit Network: Under this network two persons communicate with each other. Say Mr. 'A' sends message to Mr. 'B'. After receiving message Mr. 'B' communicates the feedback message to Mr. 'A'. Communication takes the form of a circuit. Therefore it is known as circuit network. It is similar to vertical network but in circuit network 'A' and 'B' are not necessarily superior and subordinates. It can be at the same hierarchical level.</p> <p>3. Chain Network: This network is in a hierarchical level and follows a series of commands. Here bottom to top communication does not happen. Superiors ordering the subordinates is the best example of this type of network. Also, the leader leading the group of people is an example of Chain Network. The message has to reach from top-level to bottom level without any alteration of meaning or words. Care should be taken to avoid the same. This network is not fast and few people who don't understand the message will remain in the loop.</p> <p>4. Wheel: This is highly centralized type of communication network where each subordinate receives commands or instructions from a single authority or superior 'A' and wants the immediate feedback. We can call this communication as a type of micro management. This network is an improved form of Chain Network. Since the information is received directly from the central authority, there is no chance of miscommunication and the communication is very powerful. Start-ups mostly use this type of network.</p> <p>5. Star Network: Under star communication network all members of the group communicate with each other and exchange information. This network is a must for group communication or where teamwork is involved. This network can be considered as a development of a wheel network with no central person to control the way of communication. All are free to communicate with each other. No restrictions are present to block the communication between people in the process. Teamwork is built using this communication. E.g. WhatsApp group which is related to work.</p>
<p>Characteristics of Communication Network</p>	<p>Following are the characteristics of Communication Network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The information to be passed or the message to be shared among the people in the same network should be clear and should be free from any jargon. Active voice should be preferred and the message should be in simple words and short. If the message is long, it is better to transfer the message with bulleted points. ◆ The message has to be concise which only then the listener be careful to read with full attention and with no loss of concentration. Long or lengthy messages should be avoided at any cost.

Topic	Explanation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The message passed should be explained well with concrete information. False messages should not be passed in any case which leads to communication mishaps. ◆ The messages should be passed in relevant. The information should be passed between persons in a logical, sequential and well-planned manner. Hence this part has to be concentrated well. ◆ The transmitter person should be honest, respecting others and open with the listener at the bottom level or end of the conversation. ◆ The transmitter should be considerate with the listener and should use polite words. The messenger should not be rude. The messenger should not be a racist and should never use such terms while passing the information. ◆ The listener also plays an important role in the communication network. They should understand the information very well and should clarify the same if possible. The message should be detected from the mixed words, non-verbal actions should be analyzed well, practical to understand the problems and mature enough to act according to the information. ◆ Care should be there from the listener's side to focus the message when it is sent from the other end. Miscommunication should not happen. ◆ Emotions should be controlled while passing information. The listener should not use his knowledge to pass information to other people in the loop. The focus should only be on the information passed from the top level. <p>The type of network to be used depends on the message to be passed from one level to another. Also, security has to be considered for the network communication. Each network has its advantage.</p>
Digital communication	Digital communication is any type of communication that relies on the use of technology. There are many types of communication as channels. These include email, phone calls, video conferencing, many types of instant messaging like SMS and web chats. Even blogs, podcasts, and videos are considered forms of digital communication.
Commonly used Mediums of Digital Communication	<p>Communication channels help to build your brand with your audience. It also helps to intensify sales and help you understand their behaviour. They function as a bridge between you and your audience. Following are the techniques to choose the right communication channels:—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Take a look at your budget: Your budget will also influence your choice of communication channels. Because you'll have to invest some money to get your message across, ask yourself: Is the channel affordable given your company's budget?

Topic	Explanation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consider your message: Ask yourself whether the information is formal or informal? Does it include visuals or text? Is the message time-sensitive or trivial? Does it need to be easy to find later? ◆ Get familiar with your team: The choice of communication channels depends on the preferences of your team. Who are they, and what channels do they engage in?
Advantages and Disadvantages of Digital Communication	<p>Following are the advantages of digital communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ In digital signals, the impact of noise interference, distortion is more minor. ◆ It facilitates video conferencing that saves time, money, and effort. ◆ It is less expensive. ◆ It is used in military applications. ◆ The correction and detection of errors are easy in digital communication. ◆ As compared to analog signals, it is easy to save and retrieve digital signals. ◆ In digital signals, the configuring process is easy as compared to analog signals. ◆ There is a standard encoding technique in most digital circuits. So for several processes, similar devices can be used. ◆ The probability of cross-talk is significantly less in digital communication. ◆ The implementation of hardware is more flexible in digital communication. ◆ In digital communication, to avoid signal jamming, the spread spectrum technique is used. ◆ It also facilitates audio conferencing by which we can talk to someone or a group of people. Thus, it saves time, effort, and money. ◆ To maintain the secrecy of information, the signal processing functions like compression and encryption are employed in digital circuits. ◆ Digital communication is cheaper and more straightforward compared to analog signals because of the advancement of IC technologies. <p>Following are the disadvantages of digital communication in the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ There is high power consumption in digital communication. ◆ There is a requirement for synchronization in the case of synchronous modulation. ◆ There is a sampling error. ◆ The most common limitation of digital communication is that it requires more transmission bandwidth. It is due to the higher data rate because of analog to digital conversion.

Topic	Explanation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Digital communication requires analog to digital conversion at a high rate. ◆ There can be a possibility of miscommunication if a user doesn't understand something.
Essential Digital Communication Channels for Business	<p>Following are the essential digital communication channels for business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Social Media: Social media allows people worldwide to connect with friends, family, celebrities, and brands through bite-sized textual and visual content. E.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter etc. ◆ Email Marketing: Many businesses with in-house digital marketers use email marketing, with up to 66% rating this tool as excellent for delivering ROI. Email is the currency of the web, and anybody online has an active email address. ◆ Blogs: It is possible to build a cycle of publications with blogs and create new ways of approaching your audience. It is crucial to keep the blog constantly updated. That increases your visibility, loyalty to your visitors and conquers the confidence of your client. ◆ Websites: Whatever the size of your company, a website can give your business the online presence it needs to communicate and/or sell to prospects. It is where customers go to judge whether you're credible or not, and it's also one of the most impactful customer-facing communication channels at your disposal. ◆ Videos: Nowadays, videos aren't only used to entertain or promote products and services. They are produced and also used for didactical and educational purposes. Your audience needs to have an authentic experience that is interesting to guide them to the video's primary objective, which is either selling or informing something. ◆ External complaint channels: Since not everything is a bed of roses, it's common to have unhappy customers that complain about your product or service on communication channels, which you don't necessarily control. E.g. Yelp and Google reviews websites. ◆ Phone calls: One of the most common communication channels in business is a phone call. A quick phone call can clear up confusion or convey new information across long distances, and conference calls can allow multiple people to take part. Phone calls lack the non-verbal cues of in-person conversations or video-conferencing but may provide a simple, affordable communication channel for customers and employees. ◆ In-person: Talking to someone in person allows you to use both verbal and non-verbal communication cues, which can help improve the quality and efficacy of your conversations.

Topic	Explanation
	<p>Sometimes, written or digital communication can lack tone, leading to confusion. Speaking in person, your tone of voice, body language, and vocabulary can bring clarity to the conversation and ensure everyone understands what you're talking about.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Customer service: This sector, which is often the gateway for the user, goes beyond customer service to clarify their doubts and solve their problems. Quality care transforms customer pain point solutions and can turn a defender of the brand. One needs to have a qualified team with a high level of knowledge about your business and provide good service to your customers.
Listening Skills	<p>Listening skills are skills that contribute to your ability to accurately receive information when communicating with others. These skills are an important part of effective communication in the workplace. Developing good listening habits can help to ensure you understand the information correctly, interpret messages accurately and optimise your conversations and communications for efficiency. Developing skills that can help you become a better listener is important for several reasons, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Building relationships: Good listening can help you build and maintain positive relationships in the workplace. Showing interest when communicating with others can help you build trust and develop long-term, mutually beneficial professional relationships. Good listening can help you prevent misunderstandings between co-workers, perform your duties accurately and anticipate the needs of your customers. ◆ Learning new skills: Effective listening is an important way to help you learn new skills. In order to accurately follow directions, it may be beneficial to develop skills and habits that contribute to the quality of your listening. ◆ Performing effectively: Listening intently can help you accurately follow directions. By listening closely to directions, guidelines and requirements, you may be able to improve your performance and avoid errors and improve your processes.
Types of listening skills	<p>Below are four types of listening to become a better listener:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Deep listening: Deep listening occurs when you're truly committed to understanding the speaker's perspective and message. Deep listening includes paying attention to verbal and non-verbal cues in order to gain a full understanding of the speaker's experiences, thoughts, feelings and objectives. This type of listening is especially useful when building relationships, establishing trust and fostering rapport with co-workers, customers, clients or vendors. ◆ Full listening: Full listening includes trying to fully comprehend the practical content of a speaker's message. This type of listening often involves active listening skills, like

Topic	Explanation
	<p>paraphrasing and asking clarifying questions. Full listening can be particularly helpful when interpreting directions, learning new material or developing new skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Critical listening: Critical listening involves using logic and reasoning to separate opinion and fact when listening to a speaker's message. Critical listening usually involves using your previous knowledge or experiences to identify factual content in communication. Critical listening can be especially important in professions that use persuasive speaking, debating or investigatory skills. ◆ Therapeutic listening: Therapeutic listening is a more intimate type of listening that often involves receiving information from a speaker about their challenges or emotional situations. In the workplace, this type of listening is often an important part of succeeding in a career that deals with sensitive topics or emotional discussions. Therapists, doctors and counsellors often benefit from developing their therapeutic listening abilities.
Effective listening skills	<p>Effective listening is a combination of techniques that include careful listening, observation and non-verbal clues. Below are seven skills that can help you improve your active listening abilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limit distraction: An important part of active listening is limiting distraction so you can gather all the necessary information and details of your speaker's message. Limiting distraction could mean putting your phone away before entering into a conversation, having important conversations in a quiet, private space or allowing yourself a brief pause to ensure you fully understood the message of your speaker before responding. 2. Practice objectivity: Practising objectivity and ensuring you receive all information without bias can help you remain open to the messages and perspectives of your speaker. Even if you have a strong opinion about the topic of conversation, setting aside your opinions in order to receive your speaker's message without judgment can help you consider new possibilities and innovative perspectives. 3. Reflect: Reflecting refers to mirroring your speaker's message in order to convey that you understand their message. Reflecting can help assure speakers of your comprehension and can indicate your engagement in the conversation. This type of active listening skill can be especially helpful when engaging in therapeutic communication. For example, if your speaker says, "I'm tired of working late to make up for others who don't complete their tasks," you could say, "It sounds like you're feeling frustrated and overlooked." 4. Clarify: An important part of active listening is asking questions when you need clarification. Clarifying aspects of the conversation can indicate you're intently listening and

Topic	Explanation
	<p>provide you with an opportunity to confirm your understanding. To clarify, you may use specific, simple questions that require a “yes” or “no” as a response or you may ask more general, open-ended questions that require more elaboration from your speaker.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="328 323 1018 464">5. Summarise: Restating key themes and summarising content is an effective skill that can contribute to your ability to practice active listening. To summarise, consider offering a brief statement that describes the primary message or key theme of your speaker’s message. <li data-bbox="328 472 1018 612">6. Use body language: You can use your body language to indicate your understanding by nodding, making eye contact and responding with appropriate facial expressions. Body language may be especially important for professionals who use therapeutic listening to complete their daily duties. <li data-bbox="328 621 1018 761">7. Share: Sharing involves expressing your own thoughts, feelings and experiences to relate to your speaker. This active listening technique can help you contribute to the conversation and align expectations for the next steps, deliverables and responsibilities. <li data-bbox="328 769 1018 959">8. Give your full attention: Distractions can make it difficult to focus on the things a speaker is telling you. In order to become a good listener, limit as many distractions as possible and provide the speaker with your undivided attention. This includes silencing your phone, turning off your computer and avoiding the urge to multitask by checking emails or giving your attention to other tasks. <li data-bbox="328 968 1018 1257">9. Pace the conversation: Being a good listener often includes opening a dialogue and allowing for a conversation to start between you and the speaker. Pace the conversation by determining the goal of the speaker’s message and evaluating their body language to decide when it is appropriate for you to respond with your own input. Instead of rushing to fill silences, provide time for the speaker to finish their thoughts and acknowledge their message accordingly. This will also give you the time to absorb their message and process what they are saying before it is time for you to respond. <li data-bbox="328 1265 1018 1422">10. Ask meaningful questions: Once it is time to open up a dialogue, the questions you ask should be meaningful and establish your investment in the speaker’s message. Ask questions that can help both you and the speaker reflect on what they said as well as elaborate any points that may need extra clarification. <li data-bbox="328 1430 1018 1546">11. Recall previous information: Recalling information that the speaker has already discussed as well as summarising the points they made in your responses can help you become a more effective listener.