

GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND INTERVIEWS

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of Group Discussion
- To understand the means to crack GD
- To evolve skills to crack GD

1.1 DEFINITION

"Group" is a collection of individuals who have regular contact and frequent interaction and who work together to achieve a common set of goals. "Discussion" is the process whereby two or more people exchange information or ideas in a face-to-face situation to achieve a goal. The goal, or end product, maybe increased knowledge, agreement leading to action, disagreement leading to competition or resolution or perhaps only a clearing of the air or a continuation of the status-quo. Group discussion (GD), by virtue of the term, means exchange of views by participants on a given subject. The whole idea is to bring together a set of people on a

common platform to share their ideas, thereby giving an opportunity to exhibit not only their knowledge, but also to understand and enhance their learning by absorbing the thoughts of other people.

"Group Discussion", is a popular methodology used by many organizations (company, institute, business school, etc.) these days to gauge whether the candidate has certain personality traits such as interpersonal communication skills, confidence in public speaking, team spirit, leadership abilities, social behaviour and problem-solving skills. GDs form an important part of the short-listing process for recruitment or admission in a company or institution. A Group discussion is a process where in 10 candidates/persons on an average present their viewpoint on a given topic in front of an audience. The participants sit facing each other almost in a semi-circle and express their views on the given topic/issue/problem.

1.2 PURPOSE

Team work is an essential element of business management and corporate work-sphere, a person's ability to perform well in a GD is very critical for a successful career. A GD helps to achieve group goals as well as individual goals. The examiner can evaluate both the personality traits and group skills of candidates participating in a G.D. It is basically a situation test wherein a sample of a candidate's group worthiness and potential as a worker comes out quite explicitly. Over the recent years, Group Discussion became a popular method of assessing a candidate's soft skills. The contenders who are shortlisted on basis of written exams have qualified with their intelligence quotient, i.e., aptitude and knowledge. However, since the significance of emotional quotient arose, new tools such as GD were devised to gauge candidates' social and interpersonal skills. Organizations conduct GDs to find out whether you possess the critical qualities/skills to contribute effectively to the goal accomplishment process.

- It helps evaluate whether a candidate is the right fit for the organisation.
- It helps assess how a participant performs under different situations in a group.
- It helps to judge how one conceptualizes and manoeuvres his ideas through the discussion.
- It helps in analysing the candidate's attitude towards fellow members through one's communication and interpersonal skills, listening ability, humility and tolerance to others ideas.
- It helps in shedding light on candidate's leadership and managerial skills, problem-solving aptitude, creative thinking and knowledge on diverse topics.

1.3 TYPES OF GROUP DISCUSSION

There are two types of Group Discussion, which are listed below:

- Topic-Based Group Discussion
- Case Study Based Group Discussion

1.3.1 Topic-Based Group Discussion:

There are few candidates in a group, where each group is given any topic. The group members discuss the topic, which is called a Group Discussion.

The topic-based Group Discussion can be further classified as:

- i. Controversial Topics
- ii. Knowledge-Based topics
- iii. Abstract Topics
- iv. Conceptual topics

Controversial Topics:

The discussion on controversial topics becomes a debate. Such topics are given to judge the participants' temper and how they can handle the discussion without losing their calm. It shows that how a candidate can represent his/her views without arguing with other participants.

The example of the controversial topics can be Reservation System, Religion equality, etc.

Knowledge-Based topics:

The participants should have a proper understanding of the topic before proceeding for a discussion. The information should be enough to convince the panelists. The essential thing is to be confident. Do not initiate the discussion if you are not aware of the topic.

The examples of Knowledge-Based topics can be 'CAT vs. GATE' and 'Government jobs vs. Private jobs'.

Abstract Topics:

The abstract topics test the creativity and thinking of a candidate. It also tests the communication skills.

The example of Abstracts topics can be 'A walk to remember'.

Conceptual topics:

The conceptual topics are widely used today by companies. It tests the knowledge, logical, and aptitude skills of a candidate. The topic for the

discussion is randomly selected, giving panelists a space to judge the participants' creative thinking and ability to handle the situation.

The example of Conceptual topics can be 'Life is a Puzzle.'

1.3.2 Case Study Based Group Discussion:

The Case study based Group Discussion is generally followed by the MBA Institutes, such as IIM, etc. In such a discussion, a problem is given, and the participants are asked to resolve them. The preparation time is also higher as compared to other discussions. The panellists test the teamwork and decision-making skills of the participants.

The participants need to active and updated with the things around them. It also tests the observation capability of the participants.

1.4 BENEFITS/IMPORTANCE OF GD

Increases confidence:

The GD allows the participants to speak in public, which increases their confidence to speak without any hesitation.

Focuses on Deep thinking:

It tests the knowledge of a candidate. The participants get only a few minutes (3 to 5) for the preparation. In such a small duration, they have to make a list of points to speak. The participants in a group listen and understand other participants points of view, making them think deeply about the topic.

Improves Communication Skills:

GD helps the students to represent their views and ask the questions. It not only increases the confidence of a candidate but also enhances their communication skills.

Removes hesitation of speaking:

Some candidates usually have hesitation in speaking in public. At starting, such candidates might face difficulty while speaking. But, after two or three Group Discussion, it improves. Group Discussion helps such candidates to speak loudly and express their views on the topic. It further removes their hesitation in speaking.

Team Work:

Group Discussion is also based on teamwork. In a company, it is very important to work as a team for the assigned project. Due to this, the quality of working together with team members is checked in the Group Discussion. The panellist also judges the cooperation of participants in the group. It allows participants to share their views with other participants in the group.

Behavior:

It helps to understand the attitude and behavior of the candidates towards other participants in a group.

Listening Skills:

GD improves the listening skills of the candidates. For example, the panellist may ask any candidate in a group to summarize the discussion. A candidate can only summarize if he/she has good listening skills. Due to this, every candidate presents in the discussion listens carefully. It further improves the listening skills of the candidates.

Diversity in the Ideas:

The Group Discussion involves sharing ideas with other participants in the group. Every participant shares his/her thoughts in the group, which makes the diversities in the ideas.

Recruitments:

Group Discussion is widely used for the recruitment process. It helps panelist to select a few candidates from the group. It also helps them to judge that the candidate is suitable for the organization or not.

1.5 PROCESS

It is not fixed that the group discussion is always performed around the table. People can sit in any arrangement, but everyone should be able to see every face. It is not only the usual discussion, but it is also a discussion with knowledge and facts.

- a. The process of a Group Discussion starts with the **announcement of the topic**. The given topic could be technical, factual, or case study.
- b. Before beginning with the discussion, the **preparation time** of 3 minutes is given. The time can also extend in case of a long case statement.
- c. Any participant in the group can **initiate the discussion**. After the lead participant, anyone in the group can continue the discussion. Similarly, everyone gets the chance to speak. One after another, participants in the group expresses their views on the given topic.
- d. It ends when the panelist stops the discussion or may ask one or more than one participant to summarize the GD. Whenever you are asked for the summary, remember to cover the discussed points. The summary cannot include the words that were not part of the discussion. The participants that were quite among the discussion are generally asked to summarize it, which is a good opportunity to present their views. But, it does not mean that everyone should be quite. The summary should include the essential discussed points and the conclusion of the discussion.

- e. The final scores are calculated. Based on the performance of each participant, the panellist gives the scores. The panellists are usually four to five to judge the performance of candidates in the Group Discussion.

1.6 EVALUATION OF A GD

A group discussion helps panellists to analyse the following traits in candidates:

a. Communication skills:

The business world demands you to have a good command over communication skills. Discussing with other members in a GD determines your ability to express opinions, listen to others and the ability to get along with others. GD Increases confidence by allowing the participants to speak in public, which increases confidence to speak without any hesitation.

b. Listening Skills:

The panellist observes that every candidate is listening to the discussion or not. They can also ask any candidate to summarize the discussion at the end. The panellist may infer the poor listener in many ways, such as lack of confidence, poor eye contact, or poor summary at the end. Hence, it is a rarest and essential skill to be a good participant in a Group Discussion.

c. Understanding body language:

The panellists mainly focus on eye contact and hand movements. Your way of sitting is also essential. Hand movements are the sign of your keen interest in the discussion. You cannot sit randomly as you are in your home. You have to be very careful about the ways you sit, speak, etc. The speaker should maintain eye contact with every participant in the discussion. But, it does not mean that you should not maintain eye contact when you are not speaking. You are required to be aware the whole discussion period. Improper body language is considered as a lack of interest or a lack of confidence. It will also distract the attention of panellists from your words. Do not participate in the unusual activities, such as playing with pens and hairs, tapping on the desks, and laughing. You should grab your focus only on the topic.

If your hands are crossed it indicates that you are not interested to listen and you are not open to others' opinions. Whereas, if you nod your head and maintain good eye contact with the speaker it shows that you are interested to listen to him/her.

d. Leadership skills:

How well you are able to lead the topic by speaking logically and effectively and also by taking into consideration the viewpoints of all the other participants will determine whether you can lead a team or no. In a group, one or two participants play the role of a lead. They define the

essential points of a topic and try to hold the grip of the group to achieve a common goal. Such candidates often score bonus points. But it does not mean that the candidate who speaks first will get bonus points while others not. It mainly depends on the content. If the first person's content is not impressive compared to the other candidates, he/she will get fewer scores.

e. Analytical skills:

The GD determines how well you can analyse facts and figures. Your ability to present facts and figures creates an impact on how well-learned and how well-read you are.

f. Team Player:

Panellists look forward to a candidate who is a team player. GD gives an excellent opportunity to understand whether the candidate is a good team player or not. A candidate's performance in a GD reflects whether he/she is able to work in a team, trust the team or if he/she wishes to complete tasks by himself/herself.

g. Dealing with stress:

In a GD, everyone wants to present and prove their points. So everyone will try to speak the most so that panellists recognise and give them extra points. In such a chaotic situation if a candidate is able to keep his/her calm and present his/her opinions while receiving the opinions of others, determines his/her ability to deal with stressful situations.

e. Group dynamics:

Being in a group, how well you are able to adapt to the changing situations decide your flexibility. The GD goes through different phases and one should understand the right time to enter and leave a discussion.

f. Problem Solver:

A GD should always move towards finding a solution. Talking about the situation throughout the GD will never help. The candidate who moves towards arriving at solutions will get more attention than those who keep discussing the problems.

1.7 GUIDELINES TO CRACK A GD

There are some rules of a Group Discussion. The rules of Group Discussion are listed below:

Prepare well for the topic:

The quick trick is to note all the important points during the preparation time. Do not write brief paragraphs. Try to write short points and explain them briefly in the discussion.

Be confident about your content:

It would help if you always were confident about your content. If you are not confident, you may hesitate while speaking, which will create a negative impression.

Participants Introduction:

Most participants only focus on their content. You should be aware during the introduction of all the participants in your group. To get attention, you can call out the person's name when the discussion gets diverted.

Body Language:

Always take care of your body language. Do not focus only on the content.

Leadership:

Try to take the lead in the group if you are confident about the topic and the knowledge.

Avoid false starts or commitments:

Do not initiate the discussion if you are not sure about your content. Do not present any wrong information.

Follow your Domain:

Every company has its own culture. Prepare your content according to the company requirements. For example, industrial companies will focus more on technical talks, while marketing companies seek the combination of creative and oriented content.

Do not fight:

In the Group Discussion, some candidates often get aggressive. Do not fight during the discussion. Most of the companies require sensitive and polite candidates rather than aggressive ones.

1.8 MISTAKES TO AVOID IN A GROUP DISCUSSION

Most of the candidates in a Group Discussion are not aware of some mistakes. Little mistakes can have an adverse impact on our impression towards the judges, which are listed below:

Stop taking leads if you do not know much:

We should not take the lead in a Group Discussion if we are not much aware of the topic. If we are confident and have much knowledge about the topic, we can initiate the discussion of that group. Otherwise, wait for others to start. Being second, third, or fourth in the group helps you better understand the topic by listening to other candidates.

Do not hesitate to initiate the discussion:

If you have much knowledge and are confident about the topic, try to take the lead.

Do not copy anyone else ideas or comments:

You should not copy the ideas and comments of other participants in the group. It creates a negative impression. In case you do not have any idea about the topic, it's better to act smart. Analyze and listen to other participants, add some points, and convert it in your own words.

Do not avoid eye contact with other participants while speaking:

When you start a discussion, you should not forget that it is a discussion with multiple candidates. It means that you are not only speaking but having conversations or debates with them. Avoiding eye contact is considered a sign of disrespect and a lack of confidence.

Do not lose confidence in the whole discussion:

The group discussion is not carried for a long duration. It is just for a short span of time. Try always being confident. Do not get nervous if some point goes wrong. Mistakes often happen, but how to recover is more important. Take a challenge to correct your mistakes and come back again with confidence.

Do not speak slowly:

You should always speak loudly in a Group discussion so that everyone can hear and understand your words. Sometimes, the scene of a GD becomes like a market where everyone speaks, but no one is clearly audible. If you have a low voice, there is no chance for you to stand. You can increase your volume and try to settle down the commotion. It will also leave a good impression.

Try to contribute in a discussion rather than just speaking:

Some candidates often speak continuously in a single go. The reason may be the fear of not getting another chance. You should try to cover one keyword at a time by breaking the points into two or three different parts. The words we speak should be valuable without any repetition.

Questions:

- a. What is Group Discussion?
- b. Why is GD necessary?
- c. Explain the GD Process.
- d. Explain the importance of Group Discussion.
- e. Explain the types of Group Discussion

- f. What are the rules of Group Discussion?
- g. List mistakes to avoid in a Group Discussion
- h. List simple hacks to crack a group discussion for beginners

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

Learning outcomes

This model will help a student:

- Describe effective strategies to prepare for an interview
- Differentiate between types of interview situations and identify appropriate interview techniques for each
- Discuss various question types common in interviews
- Be aware of Interview Etiquette

Landing a job isn't as easy as applying for one. At an interview you have only got only one shot with a prospective employer before they move on to more qualified applicants, so it is imperative that an applicant does everything he/she can to show that he/she is the person they need. This is your big chance. You have been asked to go for an interview. The employer is interested in you or he or she would not have taken the time to schedule the interview. Here are 10 tips for winning at an Interview

1.9 DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

Defining your goals:

The most difficult part of finding employment is figuring out what you actually want to do. Earning a degree in a particular field or working many years in a specific industry should not limit your options. When choosing or changing careers, there are two very important questions to consider: first, while a particular industry or job title may seem glamorous or enticing, are you really prepared to take on the day-to-day duties that such a position entails? Ask yourself whether you are actually ready and willing to meet the demands of this job or whether it is just a job title you think you could impress your friends with. Second, are you prepared to live the lifestyle that this job demands? For example, while the idea of becoming a talent agent or a personal assistant to a celebrity sounds like a dream job, are you willing to be at somebody's beck and call twenty-four hours a day? Are you ready to deal with belittling comments and the occasional difficult personality? Many high-profile and/ or high-paying jobs do not leave you much free time. If you are not sure of the customary duties and tasks of a position, try to speak with someone in the field or to a career counselor so that you can learn more about them. Make sure you research the job, its duties, and the company before accepting a position. You never know. That dream job could turn out to be a real nightmare. If its not

possible, seek the help of a career professional when trying to figure your step.

Career Tests:

Although some people may ridicule the idea of career tests, sometimes taking a test may benefit knowing the career you may be inclined towards. The internet provides a multitude of platforms where one can take a test. It's true that a computer or some pre-manufactured form or even a career counselor probably won't know more about you than you do. Therefore, you should not rely solely on what these tests or counselors tell you. But be open-minded. If a career test suggests that you would make, say, a fantastic teacher, why not take the time to figure out what such a person actually does?

Job seeking techniques:

There are several different job-seeking techniques that you may employ. They include the following:

- **Answering an advertisement:** Advancing technology has paved the way for literally thousands of job-hunting Web sites. Infact, on the Internet, today's job seekers can access millions of job openings around the world with just a few clicks of the mouse.
- **Employing the help of a recruiter or employment service firm:** If you don't have time to pour over classifieds employment services are the way to go. Whether you are looking for a temporary or direct hire job, there are enough staffing firms out there to service the particulars of any job seeker's search for employment, whether you are at an entry-level or an executive.
- **Calling on personal contacts (networking):** Ask professionals how they got their current position, and chances are at least one will say through a friend, family member, or business contact. No matter what profession you're interested in, chances are that you know someone in that field, or you at least know someone who knows someone. The point is, you should be able to find someone in your desired field who can help you in some way. Even if this person cannot give you a job, he may be able to refer you to someone who can. Making connections to other people is an easy way to break into a new field and a smart way to advance in your current industry.
- **Sending unsolicited resumes directly to the employer (also known as the direct contact method):** One of the biggest frustrations job seekers face is browsing through a company's available opportunities only to find that there are no jobs available to suit their skills. So what should you do if the company of your dreams is not actively recruiting people now? The answer is simple: Send a resume anyway.

Creating Your Resume:

Once you've figured out what you want to do with your life and how you're going to go about achieving that goal, the next step to actually getting a job interview is to create an attention-getting resume. Your resume is the piece of information that lets a potential employer know what your skills are and whether you would be a good fit for the available position and/or the company. For this reason, your resume must be as detailed and informative as possible, without reaching too far beyond a one-page limit. A second function: You want to create a resume that will be attractive and draw as much attention as possible. Remember, getting noticed is the only way to get a job.

Applying Your Strategy:

You've got your resume and cover letter together. Now it's time to start sending it out. Use the Internet to search out available positions and post your resume to various job boards.

Be Prepared for the Call:

Waiting to hear from interested employers can seem to take forever. Finding a new job can take up to several months. Try to be patient and always be prepared. Many employers like to screen a person over the phone before calling for a personal interview. You need to be ready to impress them with your answers and experience at any time of day.

Getting the Interview call:

Getting a call to come in and interview with a company can be one of the most exciting and nerve-wracking parts of the job search experience. So many questions arise about what to say, what to wear, when to arrive, and so on. One main point to keep in mind is that you have already impressed this person with your resume. Now all you need to do is show him/her that you can do the job.

1.10 PRE-INTERVIEW PLANNING

First and foremost, you need to ask yourself if it is necessary to prepare before an important interview and whether having an interview strategy is an absolute must. Well there can only be one sensible answer to that. Yes, having an interview strategy makes you **PROACTIVE**. Which in simpler terms means anticipating the way in which the interview will head and being thoroughly prepared with your answers so that you are not caught unaware. Moreover, it is also very important to decide beforehand:

1. What facets of yourself do you want the panel to know?
2. What weaknesses or disadvantages do you need to minimize.
3. What do you need to know about the organization to decide whether to accept this job if offered to you.

Preparation on self:

- Preparing for an interview requires a lot of time and patience. You begin to know which questions to expect and decide which answers work best and which fall short of perfect. The more interviews you participate in, the closer you are to winning that perfect job. Some useful tips:
- Revisit your textbooks.
- Gear up for general awareness/current affairs.
- Prepare answers with respect to extra-curricular activities.
- Chalk up long term and short-term career goals.
- Introspect on your personality.
- Do thorough research on the organization.
- Prepare questions on the job profile you have applied for.

Practice:

Certainly, you've heard the saying "Practice makes perfect." It's true. The more you interview—or even practice for an interview—the more likely you are to master the art of it. Learn some of the most commonly asked interview questions, and practice your answers to them. Figure out the kinds of answers that an interviewer would be looking for, and think of a way to answer these questions as they relate to you and your own experience.

1.10 ON THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

The big day has finally arrived. You've done your homework; you're ready for that hiring manager. With any luck, you went to bed early and got a good night's sleep, knowing you're well prepared for the following day. You get up early, allowing yourself ample time for breakfast. If you have more than one interview, you may want to carry a snack to pump up your energy. This is a day when you need to be alert and focused, confident and prepared.

Dress for Success:

Prospective employers will judge you on the way you are dressed. This does not mean that if you wear do not meet dress expectations, the job will go to someone else. It simply means that the interviewer looks at your exterior as a representation of your interior. If it is obvious that you took the time to choose the right clothes for this interview, it is likely that you will put the same amount of thought into your work. Arriving for an interview too casually dressed tells the interviewer that you don't care enough about the job or the company to put your best self forward. Dress up a little bit more for your interview than you would if you were actually

going to work at the company. The rules of dress laid out for both men and women are very specific and should be strictly followed.

For Men:

If you are a man interviewing for a professional position, you should always wear a suit. A shirt and tie might be sufficient to make you the best dressed guy at your current job, but it won't cut it in an interview. More conservative colours—colours like black, navy blue, or charcoal grey—are the best colours to choose. Avoid shiny shirts; they are a major no-no. Socks should blend in well with the shoes and pants. Stick with a colour that won't stand out.

For Women:

The rules of proper workplace attire for women have been changing over the past several decades. The traditional pantsuit that doesn't differ much from the men's version. Professionalism dictates that women wear trousers/a skirt to an interview. The length of the skirt (if worn), should be professional. Knee length is always appropriate. Again, regardless of the company's particular dress code, women are expected to wear a trouser suit / traditional suit/saree to the interview. Colors should be conservative. A black or navy blue skirt/trousers and jacket are the best choice. Avoid colors like pink and powder blue. They won't help you assert your professionalism. Don't wear anything that dangles. That goes for earrings, bracelets, and necklaces. Avoid clothes that are too tight; you'll be less comfortable and you won't be taken seriously.

Grooming:

Personal grooming is another matter each candidate must attend to before heading out the door to an interview. Careful grooming indicates both thoroughness and self-confidence. Women should not wear excessive makeup or jewellery. If you have painted nails, make sure they are of a conservative colour. Men should be sure to check that any facial hair is neat and trim. If you have a beard or a moustache, make sure it is well groomed. Otherwise, men should make sure that they are clean-shaven when they arrive for an interview. All candidates should wear very little—if any—perfume or cologne. Cigarette-scented clothing may also offend an interviewer with a sensitive nose. Remove any nose rings, cover your tattoos with long sleeves, and tuck your water bottle in your briefcase, not a knapsack.

A few more tips:

- Have everything you need at the interview ready to take with you.
- These include ID card, black pen and pencil, an extra copy of your resume, and references.
- Place your resume and references in a file folder or envelope to keep them fresh.

- Hair should be styled and combed, clothes crisp and pressed, and shoes polished.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before your scheduled interview.

1.11 THE FIRST DEFINING MOMENTS

The first minute or two of any interview are the most crucial. As the saying goes, you only get one chance to make a great first impression, and this is when you want to do just that. By applying the skills discussed previously (proper attire, firm handshake, direct eye contact, and so forth), you should have no problem at making a favourable impression that will give you an edge over some of your rivals and open the door to an offer of employment.

Introducing yourself:

- Introduce yourself to whoever is in the reception area.
- Speak loudly enough to be heard and do not forget to smile.
- Introduce yourself to the interviewer.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Use the interviewers name if possible. E.g. “Good morning, Mr. Brown. I am Ted Marshal”.
- Do not offer to shake hands unless the interviewer offers first. Let your hand shake be firm.
- Do not sit until you are offered a seat.
- Do not place your belongings on the employers desk.
- Do not read or give the impression you are reading items on the interviewers desk.

Small Talk:

Before getting down to the important stuff—like why you would do well with this company—it is likely that the interviewer will engage you in a bit of small talk to get the conversation flowing. Prepare for these questions as well. Just know that the interviewer really is not interested in whether or not you hit any traffic or encountered any accidents on your way to the office. It’s just part of small talk. All too often, job seekers make the mistake of launching into a huge dialogue about how long it took them to get to the office, how they found a great short cut, and so on. The last thing an interviewer wants—or needs—in response to these initial questions is anything longer than “Great,” “Fine”, or “No problem!”. Don’t be verbose; it can cause the interviewer to question your suitability to the company immediately.

1.13 GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

Build on the First Impression:

Let the rules of the first few moments of the interview follow you into the interviewer's office as well. Always maintain strong eye contact with the interviewer. Be attentive and listen carefully to everything he says. Answer questions with brief but complete answers, and provide evidence for the answers you give. If you claim to be a loyal employee, talk about a situation in which you've proven this. Highlight some of your greatest achievements, both personal and professional. Telling stories about past experiences is one of the best ways to leave an impression; an interviewer is more likely to remember a story that you told than an answer you gave, so be sure to cite evidence when you can.

Showcase Your Knowledge:

Here is a list of areas of questioning

- Academic/Technical
- Job experience
- Interests and activities
- General awareness
- Career goals
- Personality
- Background

If you've done your homework and researched the company, position, and industry, you should have no problem demonstrating your knowledge to a potential employer

Types of questions:

- **Rapport questions:** Questions at the beginning of the interview that will relax the candidate and get him or her to speak freely.
- **The direct question or close-ended question:** This kind of question permits the interviewee very little, or no freedom in selecting their response. There is usually one specific answer. 'What "A" level subjects did you do?'
- **Bipolar questions or yes/no questions:** If the interviewer wants to limit the potential responses beyond the limitations already imposed by direct questions, they can ask a bipolar question, which limits the answer to one of two possible answers or simply 'yes' or 'no'.

‘Were you actually there when the accident happened?’ (yes/no) ‘Are you happy in your job?’ (yes/no) ‘Would you be able to start work by the first of March?’ (yes/no).

- **The open-ended question:** Unlike the previous questions, this type of question allows the interviewee maximum freedom in responding.
- ‘Tell me about yourself.’ ‘How do you see the problem?’ ‘What are your feelings on this?’ ‘How do you think a course in business education or training can help you do the job better.’
- **Probing question:** Frequently, the initial response given to a question may be lacking in detail or may indicate the need for a follow-up question.

‘Could you give me an example of what you mean by poor workmanship?’ ‘When you say you haven’t been late very often how many times would you say you’ve been late during the last month, say?’ ‘I’m not sure I really understand what you mean by that. Can you give me some examples?’ ‘Which of those causes is the most serious, do you think?’

- **Hypothetical or ‘what if’ questions:** Questions that ask the candidate to indicate what she/he would do in a certain situation.

‘Let’s assume that you have discovered one of your subordinates is drinking heavily and that it is interfering with their work. What would you do?’ ‘Imagine I had to introduce a new piece of equipment or process which was going to affect the work routine of my employees. How would you advise me to go about it?’

- **Sell me question:** This is one in which the interviewer, asks the candidate to show how he/she would sell a product to a prospective customer. For example, the interviewer might say, pointing to an imaginary motorcycle, ‘Sell me this motorcycle.’ Or, ‘Sell me this pen’, or ‘Sell me this watch.’

Many start by telling the good qualities of the motorcycle, how it is fuel efficient, looks beautiful, can ride on rough roads, its pick-up speed, and so forth. In other words, they begin with the good qualities of the product. Covey says: “The amateur salesman sells products. The professional salesman sells solutions to problems.” So open up the customer before you open up your bag. This means that first you should find out the customer’s needs and problem. For example, ask him: “Do you do most of your traveling in the city or in the countryside? How many kilometers on the average do you drive daily? Do you usually take a rider or do you usually travel alone? Do you want a heavy bike or a light bike? Are you more interested in its looks or in its fuel efficiency? In what price range are you thinking?”

Cute questions:

A 'cute' question is a name given to a type of question an interviewer may ask to see how you react to an unusual situation. Examples: "How would you sell a mirror to a blind man?" "How would you sell a refrigerator to an Eskimo?" There is nothing, as they say, 'cut in stone' here but a good path to follow is this. Keep your cool and say something like this: "I believe a salesperson is one who sells solutions to problems. It would seem that there is no problem that a mirror will solve; I would not like to sell someone a product he couldn't use. Consequently, I don't think I would try to make that sale. Of course, if the interviewer insists, then you had better give it a try but he or she will rarely insist.

Illegal or improper questions:

Many countries are giving guidelines on legal and illegal questions in an interview to prevent discrimination. Questions that involve race, creed, caste, sex, national origin, marital status, number of children, and the like are increasingly being held as illegal in many countries. They are being seen as invasions of privacy and as forming the basis for claims of discrimination. They are just as inappropriate in the interview as they are on the application form. Really, the only questions interviewers can ask are those directly related to the qualifications needed for the job. Sometimes the question is asked without any bad intent by an inexperienced interviewer; at other times, it is not so innocent. In any case if you are asked such a question the only thing to do is to answer the question but try to offset the doubt in the interviewer's mind by adding a statement that counteracts his or her misgiving. For example, 'I am married but I make sure that my marriage commitments do not in anyway interfere with my work responsibilities.' Or tactfully, "Is this really relevant to the post?"

Standard interview questions:

- What is your biggest weakness?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What qualities do you admire most in people?
- Do you think the time spent in extra-curricular activities when you were studying, was worthwhile?
- Would you rather have a modest salary with the chance for a big performance bonus or would you rather have a larger salary with no chance for a bonus?
- Tell me about the last time you were angry and how you handled your anger.
- What are the things that motivate you?
- Tell me of one instance where you failed to attain a goal.

- What is most important to you in a job?
- How would you describe yourself in three words?
- Are you looking for temporary or permanent work?
- What do you want to be doing in five years?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- How did you become interested in this company?
- What jobs have you held? Why did you leave those jobs?
- Do you prefer working alone or with others?
- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- What makes you think you can do this job?
- What do people like about you?
- What do they not like?
- How would your friends describe you?

Responding to questions:

- Give more than just one word or yes/no answers.
- It is never appropriate to be cute or funny in your answers.
- Do not be afraid of a moments silence as you contemplate a question that has been asked.
- Indicate that you have heard the question and are thinking about it.
- Use phrases like “let me think about that a moment” or simply “hmmm”.
- At all times, keep your eyes on the interviewer.
- Listening during the interview is an important key for success.
- Do not answer without listening or only after listening to half the question.

Asking questions:

The interviewer will probably give you a chance to ask questions toward the end of the interview. Be prepared. If you are not you will appear uninterested in the job. All your questions should be related to the job. If nothing has been said about salary, it is appropriate to ask what the salary is for the position. However, this should not be the first question you ask. Be sure that the questions you have asked have not been answered before already. Some sample questions are:

- What are your work hours?
- Is there an opportunity to work overtime?
- What training does the company provide?
- What the options available for research and up-gradation in the near future?

Closing the interview:

The interviewer will probably say something like, "Well, if you have no more questions" to let you know that he or she is finished. Smile and rise in preparation for departure. If you have not been offered the job, ask when you will be notified of the interviewer's decision. Thank the interviewer for his or her time and leave. You may offer to shake hands.

1.14 AFTER THE INTERVIEW

While you may be tempted to put your feet up and sit by the phone after a successful interview, don't pat yourself on the back yet. Even if the interviewer asked you questions about your salary requirements or asked something along the lines of "If we were to hire you, when could you start?" it doesn't mean He/she's made his/her decision. After you've shaken hands and said goodbye to the interviewer, take nothing for granted.

Saying "Thank You":

After the interview, there is one more opportunity to impress the interviewer. Write him or her a thank-you letter. Remember, you should send a note to each person you spoke with during your visit to the office. The letter will bring your name to the mind of the interviewer again. Simply thank the interviewer for the time spent with him. Also, mention that you are interested in the position. Send your letter the day after the interview.

1.15 MANAGING QUESTIONS

From the possible responses given, indicate the answer that puts the applicant in the best light.

What do you do?:

- a. I am a teacher.
- b. I teach a class of 40 handicapped children.
- c. I am responsible for the physical, social and mental development of 40 handicapped children. This involves not only the personal attention and motivation of those 40 young people but also considerable selling skills convincing their parents to invest in their ongoing development.

Why do you wish to work in our company?

- a. It has a good reputation.
- b. It's just like that.
- c. I know you spend more on research than any other company in the industry does.
- d. My background is finance and I have noticed that the last two chairmen of your company have come up through the Controller of Accounts Office.
- e. I've met a number of people working in your company and I've been impressed with the flexibility the Company offers its people, the opportunity to move from one functional area to another.

This job is considered by most to be very stressful. Do you think you can manage the stress involved?

- a. Sure
- b. I think so
- c. While responsible for quality insurance in the New Products section of Company X in Faridabad, I drove three nights a week to Delhi for my law degree, at the same time supporting my wife and three children and taking my ailing mother for chemotherapy at the AIIMS, every Monday for two years.
- d. Sir, would you define clearly what you mean by stress?
- e. I think there is altogether too much talk these days about stress.

What are your strengths?

- a. Sir, who am I to tell you my strengths? You should tell me.
- b. I think I am a hardworking, motivated, sufficiently intelligent young man who like to take responsibility and can carry tasks through to a close.

What are your weaknesses?

- a. I am a heavy drinker and I beat my wife
- b. I tend to get impatient sometimes in the sense that I dislike mediocre work and people failing to meet targets.
- c. I get angry very fast.
- d. You should tell me my weaknesses.

Tell us about yourself

- a. Born in Ambala of a military family and with my early schooling there, I am a M.Sc. from Delhi University.
- b. Born in Ambala of a large, close-knit military family I did my early schooling there. I attended the University of Delhi on a scholarship majoring in Mass Communications; summers I worked for Excel Advertising doing copy for their Rural Marketing Effort in Punjab, Haryana and UP. Thereafter, I worked in DCM Marketing Division selling a product (line) very similar to that of your household division. I think I have average intelligence but with high motivation, resourcefulness and considerable capacity for hard work.

Do you have any questions you would like to ask us?

- a. Yes. What is the typical career path for those starting as loan officer in your bank.
- b. What responsibilities and challenges can I expect to be having in your organization ten years hence?
- c. Who am I to ask you questions?
- d. What characteristics of your bank are people working here proud of?
- e. What are the training and growth prospects in your organization
- f. What is the salary?
- g. Where have people in this post moved to in the past?
- h. What are you looking for in a candidate for this post?

If we offer you the post, will you accept?

- a. Yeah. I definitely would. It seems interesting.
- b. I am excited about the job. I like the philosophy of top management and the steady growth. The job will utilize my strengths and meet my interests. I am ready to get started.

1.16 TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Every interview you participate in will be unique. The people you meet with, the interview setting, and the questions you'll be asked will all be different from interview to interview. The various factors that characterize any given interview can contribute to the sense of adventure and excitement you feel. But it's also normal to feel a little nervous about what lies ahead. With so many unknowns, how can you plan to "nail the interview" no matter what comes up? A good strategy for planning is to anticipate the type of interview you may find yourself in. There are common formats for job interviews, described in detail below. By knowing a bit more about each type and being aware of techniques that

work for each, you can plan to be on your game no matter what form your interview takes.

Structured Versus Unstructured Interviews:

A structured interview is where the interviewer asks a prescribed set of questions and you give brief answers. If you have done your research, you should feel fairly confident that the interview will go smoothly—or at least without too many surprises. In an unstructured interview, the questions are more open-ended. The interviewer asks questions specifically designed to get you to reveal more about yourself than you would if you were asked the same old standard questions. The interviewer is trying to find out more about you, your character, your skills, your background, and your aspirations. Candidates are not asked the same questions, and the interviewer lets the conversation flow more freely than in a structured interview. The questions are open ended.

Phone Interviews:

If you are geographically separated from your prospective employer, you may be invited to participate in a phone interview or online interview instead of meeting face-to-face. Technology, of course, is a good way to bridge distances. The fact that you're not there in person doesn't make it any less important to be fully prepared. In fact, you may wish to be all the more "on your toes" to compensate for the distance barrier. Make sure your equipment (phone, computer, Internet connection, etc.) is fully charged and works. If you're at home for the interview, make sure the environment is quiet and distraction-free. If the meeting is online, make sure your video background is pleasing and neutral, like a wall hanging or even a white wall.

Screening Interviews:

Screening interviews might best be characterized as "weeding-out" interviews. They ordinarily take place over the phone or in another low-stakes environment in which the interviewer has maximum control over the amount of time the interview takes. Screening interviews are generally short because they glean only basic information about you. If you are scheduled to participate in a screening interview, you might safely assume that you have some competition for the job and that the company is using this strategy to whittle down the applicant pool. With this kind of interview, your goal is to win a face-to-face interview. For this first shot, though, prepare well and challenge yourself to shine. Try to stand out from the competition and be sure to follow up with a thank-you note. This is where studying the job ad or other reference may be the most helpful. That starting point has many specific words describing the opportunity. Work to use those words in your interview and think about the experiences you have that use those concepts. For example, if you were a "supervisor" and the ad talks about a "manager," be sure to describe how many people you "managed" rather than how many people you "supervised."

One-on-One Interviews:

The majority of job interviews are conducted in this format. This is the situation in which you are invited to meet with one person—whether a human resources professional, your potential boss, or a co-worker—to speak, in depth, about your qualifications and how you might benefit the company. The one-on-one format gives you both a chance to see how well you connect and how well your talents, skills, and personalities mesh.

Panel Interviews:

An efficient format for meeting a candidate is a panel interview in which perhaps four to five coworkers meet at the same time with a single interviewee. The coworkers comprise the “search committee” or “search panel,” which may consist of different company representatives such as human resources, management, and staff. One advantage of this format for the committee is that meeting together gives them a common experience to reflect on afterward.

Lunch Interviews:

In some higher-level positions, candidates are taken to lunch or dinner, especially if this is a second interview (a “call back” interview). If this is you, count yourself lucky and be on your best behavior, because even if the lunch meeting is unstructured and informal, it’s still an official interview. Do not order an alcoholic beverage, and use your best table manners. You are not expected to pay or even to offer to pay. But, as always, you must send a thank-you note.

1.17 PERSONNEL INTERVIEWS

Interviews are further characterised by the purpose for which the interview is held. The interview is used in an organisation for several purposes besides selection for employment. Present employees are interviewed on occasions such as periodical assessment or appraisal, confirmation after probation period, and promotion to a higher position. An aggrieved or disturbed employee is given an interview for settling the issue; an employee who resigns is also interviewed before leaving. Interviews of present employees are a channel of upward communication. Employees’ attitudes, opinions and views, ideas and suggestions, feelings of fear, hopes and ambitions are revealed during an interview. Besides, the interview is used for getting feedback in specific situations

Appraisal Or Assessment Interview:

Appraisal interview is a formal, scheduled discussion between an employee and his/her manager regarding performance and other aspects of job profile. It is one of the best ways for an employee to increase productivity and change work habits. In appraisal interview, the employer and the employee discuss the performances of the individual and the key areas of improvement and how the employee can grow through a feedback mechanism. The purpose is to review the employee’s performance at

regular intervals, usually a year but could be scheduled half- yearly specially for new recruits.

For the Appraisal Interview to be successful and useful, both parties have to prepare for it and must be willing to have dialogue, make joint evaluation and analysis of agreed-upon goals and possible improvements in case of deviations. It helps the employees to determine whether there is a need for training if they lack in any particular skill and who will be promoted, demoted, retained or fired.

Types of Appraisal Interview:

- **Satisfactory-Promotable:** The employee's performance is satisfactory and there is a promotion ahead. This interview's objective is to develop is to discuss the employee's career plans and to develop a specific action plan for the professional development that he/she needs to move up.
- **Satisfactory-Not promotable:** The employee's performance is satisfactory but there is no possibility for promotion. This interview's objective is to motivate the employee enough so that the performance satisfactory.
- **Unsatisfactory-Correctable:** The interview's objective is to find a way to correct the unsatisfactory performance.
- **Unsatisfactory-Uncorrectable:** This interview is usually to warn the employee about his/her performance. The worst case would be that the employee is fired.

Guidelines for conducting Appraisal Interviews

The following things should be kept in minds while conducting appraisal interviews:

- Use of actual work data like productivity reports, leaves, orders and so on.
- Try and avoid negative sentences that directly affects the employee. Compare the employee's performance with a standard not with other people.
- Encourage the employee to talk. Ask his/her opinion to improve the situation.
- Make sure the employee gets to know what he/she is doing correctly or incorrectly. Advise the employee on how to improve things.

Grievance Interview:

A grievance is resentment or complaint by an employee against some injustice which may be real or perceived. It is unhealthy for an employee to nurse a grievance. Most companies have a grievance redressal system whereby an aggrieved employee can follow the procedure to place his/her

grievance before the authorities. The exact nature of the employee's grievance is discussed and possible solutions are arrived at in the meeting.

Grievance Interviews are a formal opportunity for individual employees to provide management with their conflicts about a company policy, procedure, practice, or person. These interviews are often given by Human Resources professionals who are able to act as a more objective third party separate from the people and situation that may be creating the grievance.

When an employee brings up a grievance, a meeting with the employee is arranged as soon as possible. The employee can have a representative present at the meeting. Sufficient time is set aside for the meeting and no needless interruptions are allowed. It is important to keep detailed notes of the interview meeting; this information will be needed if the employee is not satisfied with the decision and appeals to the next stage of the grievance procedure. The employee is asked to give reasons in support of his/her case. It can be an intimidating experience for the employee to present a grievance; hence, the interviewer has to be patient and attentive while the employee states his/her case. Any questions or request for clarification should be asked only after the employee has finished presenting the case.

At this stage, the meeting may be adjourned to consider the action to be taken. Even if the grievance is not endorsed, there may be scope for compromise and reconciliation.

The meeting is resumed to inform the employee of the decision. The reasons for the decision are defined and the employee is given time to ask questions. If the employee is not satisfied with the result of the interview, s/he may appeal the decision to a higher level of management according to the grievance procedure. A grievance interview is successful only if the person with the grievance is given full opportunity to speak and state his/her point of view. The interviewer needs patience and empathy to listen attentively.

Exit Interview:

An exit interview is an interview conducted when an employee decides to resign and has handed in his/her letter of resignation. This interview aids the organisation with different aspects. Several things can be accomplished in an exit interview. The organisation can:

- Find out the precise reason for the employee's decision to leave. If there has been any misunderstanding or unresolved grievance etc, this interview may clear it.
- Get feedback on employees' attitudes to and opinion of the organisation's policies. An employee who is leaving has no fear of the bosses' displeasure and is likely to express his opinion quite freely.
- Discuss the procedures of exit.

When the exit interview is handled carefully and tactfully, it can be an asset to the organisation. For the employee leaving, the situation can be awkward and uncomfortable, whatever the reason for leaving may be. It is important not to get drawn into an emotional or heated discussion; staying calm, and maintaining cordial relations is the most advantageous course. Career experts often advise departing employees not to be too frank in expressing dissatisfaction or displeasure with the organisation or any of the executives. The departing employee could need a reference from this organisation in the future. Also, with rapidly changing organisational set-ups, a person who leaves an organisation may return to it if the circumstances change. It is better to leave the doors open.

1.18 QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of Appraisal Interview?
2. List any three preparations to be made by the interviewer before conducting the selection interview.
3. Importance of Exit Interview.
4. Give three reasons why a Group Interview is conducted.
5. Write any two misconceptions about Online Interview.
6. What are the closing techniques for an Employment Interview?
7. What are the purposes for which organisations conduct interviews, despite complete information about the candidates as a part of their CV?
8. What functions does a grievance interview serve for employer and employee, respectively?
9. How is Stress technique of questioning used by interviewers? Describe with an example.

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GROUP COMMUNICATION – PART I MEETINGS

Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Need and Importance of Meetings
- 2.2 Types of Meetings
- 2.3 Conduct of a Formal Meeting
- 2.4 Group Dynamics
- 2.5 Role of the Chairperson
- 2.6 Role of the Participants
- 2.7 Drafting of Notice, Agenda and Resolutions

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of meeting and types of meeting.
- To know how to conduct formal meeting
- To understand group dynamics, role of chairperson and participants
- To draft notice, agenda and resolutions of a meeting

2.1 NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF MEETINGS

According to Cambridge dictionary, a meeting is a planned occasion when people come together to discuss something.

Meetings are generally conducted to discuss problems or issues and make decisions. Meeting gives an opportunity to have face to face discussions on issues pertaining to the organisation. It gives a platform to all the members to voice their opinions on a given matter and helps everyone to get a 360 degree view of the matter in discussion.

According to Thill and Bovee, “Meetings are called to solve problems or share information.”

Meeting is an important tool in the business environment. It is required for the following reasons. This also states the importance of meeting.

1. Every matter's pros and cons are discussed which helps to make the right decision.
2. The decision is taken when everyone has agreed upon, so it's democratic process.

3. Improves coordination between various departments.
4. Create a feeling of belongingness in the mind of employees.
5. Ensures participation of employees and management in the decision making and policy making.
6. Helps in solving problems.
7. Aids in understanding situations and exchanging ideas.

The meeting can be conducted for various purposes like:

1. To inform or present an idea.
2. To educate and to train
3. To plan actions
4. To design policies
5. To review performance and evaluate it
6. To motivate workforce

2.2 THE MEETINGS ARE OF THREE TYPES

1. Informative: The basic purpose of this type of meeting is to give information.
2. Consultative: The members are consulted to solve a particular problem/issue.
3. Executive: Executives who have been given authority take decisions and execute it.

2.3 CONDUCT OF A MEETING

The chairperson along with the secretary drafts the notice for the meeting. They design the agenda for the same. The notice is then mailed or circulated among the members. On the day of the meeting, the chairperson along with the secretary needs to be present before time. They should ensure that the room is well equipped to accommodate the members. The arrangement for sitting, paper, writing pad, pen and pencil needs to be done. At the same time, the secretary should keep the documents ready, if the members of the meeting ask for. The chairperson should mingle informally with the members.

2.4 GROUP DYNAMICS

In an organisation, one can find many groups-both formal and informal.. When individuals come together to accomplish a particular task, they are called a group. Every individual in the group has different characteristics

and attitudes. These attitudinal and behavioural characteristics of a group are referred to as group dynamics.

Every organization is a group unto itself. A group refers to two or more people who share a common meaning and evaluation of themselves and come together to achieve common goals.

Characteristics of a Group: Regardless of the size or the purpose, every group has similar characteristics:

- (a) Two or more persons (if it is one person, it is not a group)
- (b) Formal social structure (the rules of the game are defined)
- (c) The group share common fate
- (d) The group is emotionally connected and work towards attaining common goals
- (e) More of face-to-face interaction takes place
- (f) Every member is interdependent
- (g) Self-definition as group members
- (h) Belongingness to the group

2.5 CHAIRPERSON'S ROLE

- Set the objective of the meeting.
- The chairperson must know the members and their profiles.
- After checking the quorum, the chairperson begins the meeting.
- He / She must spell out the agenda and invite participation from members.
- He / She should take up items of the agenda one by one.
- He / She must allocate sufficient time for discussion of the item and then make a decision on it.
- He / She should allocate time for each item on agenda and should ensure that each person takes time to voice their opinion.
- In case of conflict, he / she must intervene.
- He / She must try to make a decision by consensus.
- He / She has to instruct the secretary to keep the record of the discussions and resolutions passed.
- Prior to the meeting he / she has to circulate notice of the meeting and set the agenda for the meeting.

- He / She should make proper sitting arrangements.
- Besides writing pads and pens, any other technological support required should be provided.
- New members should be introduced to senior members.

2.6 PARTICIPANT'S ROLE

- To study and prepare themselves as per agenda.
- To voice opinions based on facts.
- Must speak in a clear and concise manner and within stipulated time.
- Should be ready to compromise and to give up something in the larger interest.
- Should not argue just for the sake of it.
- The members should understand that in a meeting, different views will be expressed.
- They should understand the importance of meeting and should not waste time.

2.7 DRAFTING NOTICES, AGENDA, RESOLUTIONS

1. **Notice of the Meeting:** It refers to a document that is written with the purpose to inform the date, day, time and venue of the meeting to be held, so that members can make themselves available for the same. It is prepared before the meeting takes place. It is prepared by the secretary of the committee.
2. **Agenda of the Meeting:** It is a document that is sent along with the notice of the meeting enlisting the various points of discussion to ensure members are well prepared and ensure the purpose of the meeting is not deviated. It is prepared before the meeting takes place. It is prepared by the secretary of the committee in consultation with the chairperson.
3. **Quorum:** The minimum number of members required to conduct the meeting is known as quorum.

Notice should have:

- Signature of the authority.
- Must be typed on the company's letterhead.
- Mention the venue which should be convenient to all the members.
- Must state the day and time of the meeting.

- Must state the date of the meeting. The notice should be circulated a minimum 14 days in advance. In case of the AGM in 21 days, the Board of Directors' Meeting in 7 days.
- Must state the nature of the meeting.
- Agenda should accompany the notice.

Example:

Marygold Finance Company Ltd.

123, Mehata Street, MIDC, Andheri East

Mumbai – 400 077

Tel : 022-12345678

Notice

16th September 2021

Notice is hereby given that the 21st Annual General Meeting of IFC Ltd. will be held on Monday, 7th October 2021, at Mahindra Club, 19, Marine Lines, Mumbai – 400 020 at 2.00 p.m. to transact the following business:

Agenda

Ordinary Business:

1. To read the Notice of the meeting.
2. To confirm the minutes of the AGM held on 24th October 2018.
3. To receive, consider, and adopt the audited profit and loss account for the financial year ended on 31 March 2020
4. To declare a dividend on equity shares.
5. To appoint a director in place of Mr. _____ who retires on completion of his term.
6. To appoint auditors and fix their remuneration.
7. Chairman's Speech.
8. Any other item with the permission of Chair.
9. Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

Company Secretary.

Resolution

Resolution is the decision taken at a meeting.

Resolution: It is the final decision taken in the meeting unanimously by the majority of its members. It is binding upon the company and prepared soon after the meeting ends based on the minutes taken by the secretary.

Examples of resolutions:

1. **Election of Chairman of Board:** RESOLVED that Mr. ABC be and is hereby elected chairman of the Board of Directors for the year 2020-21
2. **Appointment of Secretary:** RESOLVED that Mr. ABC be and is hereby appointed Secretary of the company on a monthly salary of Rs. _____, the appointment being terminable by three months notice on either side.
3. **Appointment of Auditors:** RESOLVED that Messrs. Kelkar and Shinghvi Chartered Accountants, Daftary Road, Malad East, Mumbai, be and are hereby appointed Auditors of the Company.
4. **Common Seal:** RESOLVED that the seal produced at the meeting, an impression of which is made in the Minute Book, be and is hereby adopted as the Common Seal of the Company, and that the Seal be kept in the safe custody under lock and key.
5. **Resignation of a Director:** RESOLVED that the resignation of Mr. ABC, a Director, be accepted with regret. It should take effect from the date of resignation. The Board places on record its appreciation of the useful services rendered by Mr. ABC.
6. **Appointment of Bankers:** RESOLVED that a Banking Account for the Company be opened with State Bank of India, Matunga Branch, Mumbai 19. RESOLVED further that all cheques drawn on behalf of the Company and all acceptances in its name be signed by two Directors and countersigned by the Secretary; and that a copy of this resolution, the application for opening the Bank Account, the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company together with the specimen signatures of the Directors and Secretary, be submitted to the Bankers.
8. **Declaration of Dividend:** RESOLVED that the dividend at Rs. 5 per share (subject to income tax) on 25,000 preference shares and a dividend of Rs. 8 per share (subject to income tax) on 30,000 ordinary shares of the company be and are hereby declared. Resolved further that these dividends be paid on _____ to those shareholders whose names were on the Company's register on _____.

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GROUP COMMUNICATION – PART II COMMITTEES & CONFERENCE

Unit structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Importance of Committees
- 3.2 Types of Committees
- 3.3 Meaning of Conference
- 3.4 Importance of Conference
- 3.5 Organizing a Conference
- 3.6 Modern Methods of Conducting Conferences – Skype & Webinar

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- The learner will learn about importance and types of committees.
- The learner will understand the meaning and importance of the conference.
- The learner will learn how to organise a conference and the modern methods of conferences

3.1 IMPORTANCE OF COMMITTEES

3.1.1 Committee

Louis Allen defines it as, “A body of persons appointed or elected to meet on an organized basis for the consideration of matters before it.”

A Committee is “a group appointed by the parent organization which meets to investigate a problem and, later, to formulate its report and recommendations.”

The word Committee means a person or persons to whom certain powers are committed by a parent body.

Generally a committee meets to:

- To get a clear perspective on a given plan.
- To arrive at a decision, based on facts and figures.
- To find out views, attitudes and emotions of participants while tackling a problem or facing a challenging situation.
- To explore the most appropriate solution to a problem.
- To accumulate data.

3.2 TYPES OF COMMITTEES

3.2.1 Executive committee:

It is a formal body with elected / appointed / nominated members. It has a formal structure and constitution. Members meet only when a formal notification is issued. It looks into administrative issues of the organisation. The decisions taken by this committee are binding on the organisation.

3.2.2 Advisory Committee:

It is the reservoir of knowledge and experience. It comprises nominated members. It provides guidance whenever required. It has no role in the daily administration of an organisation. The recommendations proposed by this committee are not binding on the organisation.

Advantages of Committee:

- It offers expert opinions.
- Helps in generating new ideas.
- Immediate feedback is available.
- Ensures employees' participation and co-operation.
- Helps in developing valuable managerial skills.
- Aids in developing better understanding and co-ordination.

Disadvantages of Committee

- It may cause delays.
- The members may indulge in irrelevant discussion.
- There is danger of domination from some members.
- Poor leadership will lead to no way.
- Inadequate or large membership will cause problems in taking decisions.
- Members may tend to avoid responsibility.

Working of a committee:

A notice informs the members about the day, date, time and venue of the meeting. An agenda is a list of items that are to be discussed at the meeting. The meeting begins when there is a quorum – one-third of the total number of members constituting that particular body. A decision can be arrived at by consensus or by putting the proposition to vote. Decisions when recorded during the meeting are called resolutions. When resolutions are recorded in the minute book, they are called minutes of meeting.

Conferences

3.3 MEANING OF CONFERENCE

3.3.1 Definition:

- The word conference is derived from a Latin word ‘confer’ which means ‘to consult together’.
- Conference can be defined as “a meeting of people to solve particular problems, take specific decisions or discuss specific matters.
- Problem solving conference, Conference for training, Conference for planning strategies.

3.3.2 Difference between meeting and conference:

Meeting:

- The number of members is small.
- It has a well defined agenda.
- The decisions taken are legally binding on the organization.
- It is very formal.
- The members are appointed or nominated.
- Meeting is organised to solve pertinent problems or implement a decision.

Conference:

- It is a relatively informal get together of a large group.
- Decisions taken are of a consultative or advisory nature.
- Participants do not have any voting rights.

3.4 IMPORTANCE OF CONFERENCE

- Creates understanding of problems.
- Solutions are worked at.
- Interaction among the delegates helps in broadening understanding.
- Organising a conference is a major public exercise.
- It builds the image of the organisation.
- It helps to build the image of the organization and earns the good will of the public.

3.5 ORGANISING A CONFERENCES

Decide the theme of the conference. Decide days, dates and venue of the conference. Depending on the subject, prepare the list of invitees and guest speakers. The main subject could be divided into sub-topics and these could be discussed during several technical sessions. Depending on the scope, the number of days can be decided. The organisers need to work out on the budget. After contacting the resource persons and confirming their availability, chalk out programme. Arrangements such as accommodations and transportation are made for out-station participants. Research papers/Extracts of papers from participants on the given topic are invited. A formal invitation outlining the details of the programme is printed. A formal invite is sent to the invitees and the resource persons. Invitations, along with registration forms, are sent to the organisations. On the day of the conference: Registration desk is arranged for the enrolment of the participants. The participants with files containing the extracts of speeches / papers submitted by the guest speakers. Pens, badges etc. are distributed along with the stationary.

Holding a Conference:

Conference is inaugurated by the Chief Guest, who outlines the purpose, need and possible outcomes of the conference. The Chief Guest's speech is known as Key-Note Address.

This is followed by Technical Sessions, in which the resource person gives his / her perspective/s and invites interactions from participants. Each session is officiated by a Chairman who introduces the speakers, allocates time for their presentations, and sums up the key ideas at the end of the session. He / She mediates between the speakers and participants during the interactive session. At every technical session there is a rapporteur, who records the proceedings as well as the outcome of the session. The Conference concludes with a formal valedictory function. The Chief Guest highlights the key ideas thrown up by the conference and comments on its overall success. All the participants get certificates. Organisers have to make arrangements for certificates, souvenirs etc. Feedback from participants, including their suggestions, are invited to bring about improvements, if any. Arrangements for food are made by the host. Other arrangements for technological support should be done. After the conference is over, a careful analysis of feedback is made. Guest speakers are sent thank you letters along with copies of their photographs.

3.6 MODERN METHODS OF CONDUCTING CONFERENCES – SKYPE & WEBINAR

Webinar (Web-based seminar): Short for Web-based seminar, a webinar is a presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar that is transmitted over the Web using video conferencing software. A key feature of a Webinar is its interactive elements: the ability to give, receive and discuss information in real-time. Using Webinar software participants can share

audio, documents and applications with webinar attendees. This is useful when the webinar host is conducting a lecture or information session. While the presenter is speaking they can share desktop applications and documents. Contrast with Webcast, in which the data transmission is one way and does not allow interaction between the presenter and the audience. Eg: GoToMeeting BigMarker Adobe Connect

Skype for Video Conferencing:

Currently, skype is one of the pioneering consumer video chat and voice call options. Many of us use Skype nowadays for communicating with our relatives and friends staying at far off places.

Skype can be used for personal as well as professional use. It can also be used for one to one conversation or one can use it for group communication. Skype can be used in both formats – voice and video. It can be used through mobile, PC, Alexa or Xbox.

Skype is also popular because of its additional features which includes instant messaging and file transfers. It supports various mobile platforms and devices (e.g. Windows Phone, Android, Apple (Mac, iPhone, iPad), etc.) and offers both free and business-oriented services. It also saves time and money on business travels. including:

- Audio and HD video calling
- Call recording and live subtitles
- Smart messaging
- Affordable international calling rates to mobile and landline
- Private conversations
- Screen sharing

3.7 REFERENCES

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3.8 REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Discuss in brief the different types of committees?
2. Differentiate between meeting and conference

3. Write short notes on:
 - a) Modern Methods of Communication
 - b) Objectives of organizing a conference
 - c) Advisory Committee
 - d) Web- conferencing
4. Define the term, "Committee" and explain its need and importance.
5. Outline the objectives of forming working committee.
6. Outline the various steps in organizing a conference.

munotes.in

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Functions of PR
- 4.3 Tools of PR
- 4.4 Qualifications for a PRO
- 4.5 Questions

4.0 OBJECTIVES

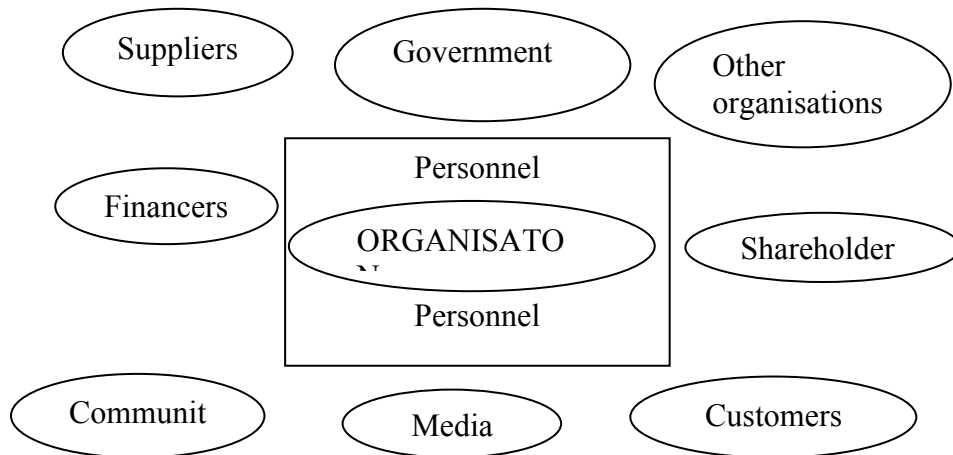
- To enable students to understand the meaning, definition and scope of public relations in the context of the modern day world.
- To list and explain the functions and tools of a PRO and to identify the qualifications and skills needed to excel in this field.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Public relations is an important management tool which an organisation uses to establish, sustain and improve its reputation among the people, organisations or government bodies it has to interact with. Organized and well executed public relations activities help develop and maintain good relationship between an organisation and its publics. This goes a long way in helping the organisation survive and prosper. In this globalised and competitive world public relations play an important role in building the image of an organisation.

Definition: Public Relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort of an organization to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.

The word 'Publics' refers to 'certain group of people'. An organisation's publics are all those groups of people with which it wants to be in communication. This may include the personnel of the organisation, its customers, suppliers, investors, competitors and even the community it is a part of. An individual may be a member of two or more 'publics'. He could be an employee of the company, he may own shares in the company and may even be residing in the same locality. Every organisation has its own set of publics and some will be more important to it than others. Their relative importance will vary depending on the activities of the organisations, current problem areas and its impact on the public's or target audience connected.



importance will vary depending on the activities of the organisations, current problem areas and its impact on the public's or target audience connected.

4.5 FUNCTIONS OF PR

As communicators they can ascertain the very pulse of the public, and their perceptions can inform and influence policy decisions of an organization, be it for finance, marketing, community, government or environment purposes. They are therefore able to play a vital role as advisors to the management on diverse aspects. In this capacity they can help shape company policy.

- The public relations division can act as the image makers for the organization or the individual and, by adopting the right medium and appropriate content, can influence public opinion.
- A good assessment of people's culture specifics enables it to devise suitable strategies in determining an organization's goals.
- The ability to communicate qualifies it to act as intermediary with lobbyists or to itself lobby for organizations with people, governments or international bodies to secure deals.
- Though event management is being carved as a special niche, this is essentially what a PR professional routinely handles.
- Events would include diverse programmes like musical extravaganzas or book launches. But organizing conferences, meetings, symposia or exhibitions are again traditionally a PR professional's responsibility.
- Crisis management is synonymous with PR. But more important is the ability to keep the antennae up and alert and pre-empt problems. PROs (Public relations officers) therefore have to act as sirens that warn of impending trouble. When a crisis occurs, they are the first ones sought to defuse the situation, or restrict and control damage. They have to act as spokespersons for the organization. In rendering

first-aid in a crisis situation, they often help by deflecting public attention from an unpleasant and unsavoury occurrence towards a positive and beneficial one. They have, therefore, been regarded as doing a 'white washing' exercise. Be that as it may, they are credited with achieving a 'turnaround' in public perception and restoring the shine to a tarnished image.

- PROs are the natural and first choice as spokespersons for an organization and need to routinely interact with the media, the government or other agencies.
- By virtue of handling both external as well as internal audiences their role overlaps with that of the HRD. In challenging times of strikes, go-slow motions, lock-ups, mergers and/or acquisitions, they are ideally suited in addressing and occasionally redressing the concerns of the employees of an organization.

4.6 TOOLS OF PR

The principal and basic tools of PROs are the spoken word, the written word and the image. The nature and the need of the audience determine the form or the medium.

A) PR and External Communication: The PROs have a wide range of tools at their command to be used according to the needs of the audience they require to address.

External Public Relations: The Publics [The external audience] of an organization may comprise its dealers, customers, transporters, trade association members, competitors, or government bodies that it needs to interact with in the course of its day to day business, its investors, other financial bodies as well as opinion makers and the public at large.

One of the best ways, therefore, to reach such a wide spectrum of audience is through mass media. Though the TV is one of the most effective means, its prohibitive cost makes it a deterrent for most except the financially sound companies. But there are other cost effective means. These could be the press, (the newspapers normally publish a press release of an event without charge), staging an open house by inviting its various stakeholders to visit the company at its office or plant, sponsoring events and displaying the company's name and logo prominently, or by conducting or participating in fairs and expositions. Companies which have the financial means also go in for films, or documentaries of public interest, highlighting the company's role or association with the project. The widening of technology has offered one more means, the web page, which, however, needs constant updating, as failure to do so reflects badly on the organisation's ability to keep abreast with the times.

i) Media Planning:

The best means of outreach to the public is through the newspapers, the television, and now the radio which is seeing a re-birth through the FM

channels. Issuing press hand-outs before a press conference or press releases about an organisation's forthcoming events is important. It is important to bear in mind that a press release must be clear, accurate, brief and objective. With the television and the radio being expensive media forms, their use would be limited, reserved for only extreme cases of crises when an organization's view point would need to be expressed.

As the press is one of the most effective tools of mass communication, it is vital that a PRO maintain an up - to-date list of sub-editors to whom the press release would be addressed. It is also necessary to do a discreet follow up. One should ensure that the press release is in the form of a newspaper report with all relevant and complete information included.

Example:

| | |
|--|-------|
| THE PROGRESSIVE ACADEM 25, M. G. ROAD, NASIK. | |
| From: Ms. S. Dixit, Chief, Information Desk, | Date: |
| To :Mr. Subi Johnson Sub-editor, Edu Info Times. | |
| For immediate release | |
| <u>New President at the Progressive Academy.</u> | |
| <p>Mr. S. D. Raghavan, M. Com, C.A., C. S., LLM, has taken over the reins of the management of the Progressive Academy as President from the outgoing President Ms. S. V. Taksale who is migrating to Canada.</p> <p>Mr. Raghavan has been associated with the Progressive Academy since 1985 and has held several important positions with distinction. He has also served as advisor to other institutions and is a member on the Boards of both educational and non-government organizations. He intends to share his plans for enhancement and expansion with parents, students and staff in his inaugural address at the Annual Function.</p> | |

In addition to the press or other media, some of the other forms of interface with the external stakeholders are exhibitions, fairs, open-house days, documentary films, as also organizing sweepstakes, competitions and community programmes.

Organising press coverage for important events in the organisation, getting senior executives to contribute articles to leading newspapers, participating in debates on TV channels is part of the image-building exercise of PRO.

The Internet is the latest and most modern medium to be harnessed by the PR Department to help in its job. The web is an interactive medium with the widest reach, as the term 'world wide' appropriately suggests. Hence, not only is the **web page** an important tool in publicising the company, its profile, its achievements and its plans, but it becomes the ideal medium to be in touch with public sentiment, its perception and reaction to a company's policy or event.

ii) Customer Relations: Customer Complaints, Corporate Social Responsibility:

a) Answering customer queries, handling customer complaints with sensitivity and promptness, providing vital information to common public is the job of the Customer Relations Officer.

PR tries to reach out to a vast number of customers by paying prompt attention to customer grievances. Growing number of Business Processing Units bear testimony to the fact that attending to customers is of vital importance to survive the competition.

With the recent enactment of the RTI Act, and a general rise in consumer awareness, the management of consumer complaints becomes an important part of the PR department. Often, companies or service providers, in a bid to retain goodwill, may even offer some adjustment, in terms of discount coupons or free coupons, to compensate for the shortfall and retain goodwill. Here is an example:

Shangri-La Resort, Madh Island,
Malad-W, Mumbai.
Nov 18, 2008.
Mr. Ravi Pant,
25, Emerald Heights, GK, New Delhi.

Dear Sir,

We have been honoured to have you as a regular patron for the past many years. We were, therefore, highly distressed to learn from your letter that you were subjected to discourteous behaviour at the reception desk after an unconscionable delay by the pick-up van, upon your arrival at the airport.

We assure you, Sir that we made immediate enquiry, as such a complaint by our valued and longstanding customer demanded top priority. We learnt that the unforeseen delay was caused by minor mishap that had taken place enroute, which had necessitated a very long detour. In normal circumstances, our drivers, as per standing instructions, are present at the airport fifteen minutes before the arrival of the flight. Your arrival

coincided with the change in shift duty at the resort. The night receptionist was just going off duty, and the day replacement was on the way to the desk after breakfast. We have learnt that it was a new trainee of the housekeeping department who was discourteous. Needless to say he has been duly reprimanded. We assure you, Sir, that our regular employees receive complete training and would doubtless have handled the situation more competently, as your own past experience would confirm.

However, we deeply regret that one of our regular customers was put to inconvenience. As an offer of goodwill we wish to offer you a complimentary lunch voucher for two at the prestigious Nizam's at Greater Kailash, New Delhi. We assure you, Sir, of our continued impeccable service and hope to receive you again on your next visit to Mumbai.

Sincerely Yours,

Rajiv Krishnan. (Manager, P.R.)

- b) There is a lot of buzz in the current corporate scenario about **CSR or Corporate Social Responsibility**. There is a growing awareness and expectation that a company that prospers and does well financially should ideally attempt to give back to society in some form or the other. Accomplishing, as well as advertising this, becomes the sole responsibility of the PRD [Public Relations Department]. For example, a pharmaceutical company may organize photographic exhibitions at public sites, such as railway stations, explaining through visuals and commentary about the scourge of AIDS and methods of prevention. Or about blindness, and the preventive measures that can be adopted.
- iii) **Organising Conferences, Seminars, Workshops:** PRD undertakes this exercise in order to take a leadership position in scholarship, and innovation among organizations dealing in similar ventures. To bring leading thinkers and people of eminence together, and make their research available to professionals, forms the core part of this exercise. Conferences are held to create linkages and establish networks.
- iv) **Fairs, Exhibitions and Shows:** Organising such events on one's own, or participating in such events, is yet another PR activity. This exercise helps an organization to gain maximum visibility and reach out to cross-sections of the society. Showcasing one's products, interacting with competitors and establishing one's position become important objectives of this exercise.
- v) **Conducting Opinion Polls and Obtaining Customer Feedback through Questionnaires:** A good relationship with those whom one interacts with and who are not part of the company is very essential. Companies work, not only towards portraying a good image to the world at large, but also, from time to time, attempt a feedback on the public perception of the company. For example, Reliance Energy,

Jet Airways, ICICI and HDFC banks have a regular feedback form in which questions like, "Were you satisfied with the time taken to attend to your query?" are included.

vi) It could also arrange an **Open House**: This is an occasion when members of the public, or family and friends of employees, can visit the plant or factory and be given a conducted tour that explains the functioning of various departments of the company. Indian Navy celebrates Navy Week in the first week of December and organizes conducted tours of some of its warships for the benefit of common public. The purpose of such an exercise is to entertain and inform.

Vii) **Trade Events** such as organizing seminars or expert talks by eminent professionals are yet another way for companies to establish and maintain good relations in society. For example, when the new budget is announced, it is common practice for financial and tax-related companies to organize talks by eminent financial experts for both, the general public or the tax professionals of their association.

Viii) **Films** are another popular way of reaching out to the public. These can be in the form of relevant documentaries or on the company's profile and its contribution to society. The commissioning of films, however, is an expensive affair and it is only companies which have deep pockets that can go in for such a medium.

ix) **Sponsorship** is a very popular means of both publicity and good PR. It is assumed that a company would sponsor only those events or programmes that are in line with their policies and thinking. The Souvenirs produced by non profit making associations or NGOs, for example, are a means to raise funds through advertisements. Sponsorship not only provides high visibility but also, through financial help, enables the execution of programmes and helps garner goodwill for the company. College competitive events, television programmes, sports events, or social projects such as health awareness drives become an excellent means to the company to build a good rapport with society.

B) **Internal PR**: The internal audience of an organization comprises its employees at various levels. The PROs can effectively use tools such as the in-house journal or magazine or the notice boards. Featuring articles, photographs, news and views, competitions, quizzes and tidbits about a company's events, achievements, employees' promotions, wedding details, births and deaths announcements, etc., help to lend a personal touch and go a long way in creating inclusiveness and a sense of bonding and belonging. Apart from these, organizing picnics, get-togethers for employees with their families, or off-site programmes, film screenings or annual sports day or other competitive activities, are other ways of creating and maintaining good relations with employees. Providing congenial work and recreation places is very essential too. Creative use of imagination and

availability of funds can result in innovative measures of maintaining good and harmonious relations with the staff.

The Internal Audience of an organization comprises its employees at various levels. It is of paramount importance to maintain cordial and congenial relations with the employees for, in the final analysis, it is they who are the actual people who help the organization achieve its goals.

The functions of Internal PR are to:

- (i) Motivate the employees and boost their morale
 - (ii) create fraternal feeling
 - (iii) Ensure free flow of communication in order to earn the trust of the employees.
- i) **The Print Medium** is the first, easiest and simplest tool. It can be used in a variety of ways. **Bulletins** are used to give the employees news about the latest developments.

In-house journals and magazines or periodical booklets are also a popular means. These usually contain a message from the management, and an editorial focusing on the latest events or products. In addition, to make them more interactive and participative, they may include articles by employees, news about them such as marriages or births and deaths, or other relevant and significant events such as the company's victory in competitive matches and games, or news that concerns them, like promotions or notes of appreciation.

- ii) **Films**, both documentary or entertainment, are a good way of engaging with the employees. When these are followed by discussions, they afford an ideal platform for interacting with them in an informal setting and strengthening the employee-management bond. They could serve the additional purpose of instruction or training.
- iii) **Open House** is a wonderful device for image building with the employees and their families. This achieves the purpose of instilling a sense of involvement with and commitment to the company. **Picnics** with employees also serve a similar objective.
- iv) **Off-site training programmes** are becoming another popular way for companies to achieve their dual objective of providing both training and entertainment to their employees in an informal setting. **Conferences**, whether internal or external, become a wonderful PR exercise to motivate the employees, to up-date their knowledge and, indirectly, benefit the company.
- v) **Exhibitions and Competitions** form yet another form of instructing, encouraging and, thereby, motivating employees.

- vii) **Documentation of Press Clippings:** becomes an important tool for an organization to keep track of the image it enjoys in public, just as the opinion poll findings reveal the perception of external or internal audiences about itself. Large companies, in fact, have well trained and specific employees, who regularly cut out the articles that include a mention of them, and maintain a master copy, as well as respective ones for the various departments. This enables an organization to refer to them to ascertain public opinion or the perceptions of various stakeholders before finalising a policy decision.
- viii) **Implementation of programmes:** like Advice and Counselling, or Suggestion Schemes help in strengthening the bond between the management and employees. The importance of congenial working conditions cannot be stressed enough in motivating employees and encouraging them to give of their best. It has been remarked, and rightly so, that, while the modern workplace seems to resemble more and more a place of relaxation, sport, which is seeing increasing competition, is becoming more and more of a hard job!

4.7 QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PRO

From the preceding detailed description of the job profile of PROs, it is evident that they have to be primarily and essentially good communicators. This implies that they not only be able to read, write and speak one or more languages, but also possess soft skills in dealing with people tactfully. They may be called upon to write and often edit written work. They need to groom juniors and train them to take on greater responsibility. In dealing with the internal employees, they need to address their problems. This implies that they have to be good listeners too. Redressing grievances, settling disputes, organizing or re-organizing the workforce, and motivating them, call for developing empathy and understanding.

As PROs deal also with the image, the ability to wield the camera for photography or films is a great asset. In fact photo journalism and documentary film making are very useful tools in communicating an organization's plans and progress. Modern technology, which has shown a dramatic progress, has further empowered and facilitated communication with video cams, camera with mobile phones, and computers, which enable not only power point presentations but also video-conferencing and film making. Since they are called upon to interact with media persons, whether print or audio-visual, i.e., the press or the T.V., it is imperative that they be confident as speakers.

In fact, organisations appoint one person as their official spokesperson. These spokespersons need to be senior, experienced, tactful, with a cool temperament in order to field difficult and often tricky questions posed by media persons intending to extract inadvertent, hasty and spontaneous replies that could be used, out of context, to damage an organization's image. Appointing just one spokesperson who alone is authorized to speak

for the organization ensures that there is but one uniform response and not multiple ones that could be misconstrued. This prized ability to speak judiciously and be able to impact the public at large is what earns the PROs the tag of “engineers of public opinion, which, though perhaps not flattering, speaks of the immense influence they can wield.

In conclusion, one could say that PROs of the present day have indeed come a long way from the time of their original, humble practice to occupy a pre-eminent position, particularly in the context of a globalised economy. But one also needs to bear in mind that in times of a downturn, they are the first victims on the chopping block, the first to be fired, as their job profile is not so skill specific as to be considered indispensable. But in times of crisis they, by conveying the right kind of information, at the right place and at the right time, can convert the resentment and ire of the public to sympathy for the organization. They dispel ignorance and provide the correct details. They can wean the public from apathy and an uncaring attitude to an interested and committed one. They can help dislodge prejudice and bring a turnaround to a better understanding. Thus, they can achieve the enviable feat of effecting a significant shift by transforming a negative perception about an organization to a positive one. Little wonder, then, that more and more institutes are offering a full fledged course in this interesting and challenging professional opportunity, enabling a growing number of youngsters with requisite skills to avail of a demanding but satisfying job option.

4.8 QUESTIONS

1. Define PR and discuss its scope in the modern day context.
2. Enumerate and briefly explain the multifarious functions that PROs need to perform.
3. Name the two kinds of audiences PROs face and the appropriate tools to address each.
4. What are the various skills need to make a good PRO? Specify situations that require the practice of each.
5. Discuss in detail any two measures of external/internal PR.
6. Draft a press release to inform of the tenth anniversary of the tourist festival in your city, which is to be inaugurated by the State Minister for Travel and Tourism.

BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE TRADE LETTERS

Unit Structure

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To enable students to understand the nature and purpose of routine and persuasive business correspondence.
2. To enable students to draft and establish better business correspondence.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Commercial correspondence normally falls into three categories:

i. Business to business letters ii. business to customers and iii. customers to business letters. In this chapter students will learn about trade letters that are normally exchanged between the two parties: traders and customers.

Trade letters include [in the order of their occurrence]

1. Inquiry
2. Order
3. Complaints, claims, adjustments
4. Consumer Redress Letters
5. Credit
6. Collection
7. Sales

1. Inquiry: A letter that seeks information about a product or a service is known as a letter of inquiry. Unless a buyer collects information about the product, he cannot place an order. His first step, therefore, is to collect the information about the product.

Drafting a letter of inquiry: Like any business letter, an inquiry letter should have a beginning, a middle and an end.

Openings:

The buyer may/can mention an advertisement as the source of information.

- a) I refer to your advertisement in theof.....date advertising the new range of.....and I wish to inquire about it.
- b) I write to inquire aboutadvertised by you in the Times of India, dated

or The individual or the firm may furnish a brief self - introduction

- a) We are a large chain of retailers and we are looking for.....
- b) We wish to replace steel cutlery in 25 of our J.P.Group of Hotels.

Or the firm may begin by stating the purpose right away. a) We are an established chain of hotels in North India We wish to replace the crockery in all our establishments.

Middle:

Buyer requests for the price-list and catalogue:

We request you to send your price-list/catalogue/quotation at your earliest/latest by....

End:

Buyer inquires about the discounts/ concessions given:

- (a) We request you to provide more details about your 20% discount scheme.
- (b) We expect 10% discount on current prices offered to educational institutions.

Buyer tries to induce seller into giving him most competitive / reasonable prices.

Reasonable prices, excellent quality product and service will induce us to place future replacement orders with you.

Shah Computer Accessories
..... 23rd April 2008.
Anupam Stores
.....

Dear Sir,

I refer to your advertisement in today's Times of India, announcing the latest range of computer accessories.

Example: Inquiry

Shah Computer Accessories

.....

23rd April 2008

Anupam Stores

Dear Sir,

I refer to your advertisement in today's Times of India, announcing the latest range of computer accessories.

My computer shop enjoys sound reputation in the area. I am interested in the new products advertised by you. As my requirement is of a varied nature, I request you to send your latest price-list and catalogue.

The advertisement mentions a special discount on large orders. Please furnish me with more details about this.

Yours truly

.....

Reply to inquiry: This is a letter which the seller writes when he responds to the buyer's letter of inquiry. He thanks the buyer for showing interest in his products; encloses his best prices/catalogue/quotations; makes a special mention of discounts so as to induce the buyer to place an early order.

Example : Reply to inquiry

Anupam Stores

..... 29th April 2008

Shah Computer Accessories.

..... Dear Sir,

We thank you for your interest in our latest range of computer. We assure you to provide best solutions to your needs with affordable price and best service in the market currently.

Please find the price list and catalogue along with this letter. Once you place the order, your order will be delivered in the promised time.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

s/d

Sales Manager

1. Order: After having collected the price-lists and quotations from various traders, the buyer places an order for goods. This letter is known as an order letter. An order letter is generally written in an order-form. If an organisation does not have an order-form, the buyer needs to write a letter. He places a sample order to begin with. This is known as a trial order. This will be followed by one or two repeat orders and the subsequent routine/regular order.

Drafting a letter placing an order:

Opening:

Reference to the receipt of price-list and catalogue.

We are happy to receive your letter dated quoting your latest prices and the catalogue containing detailed illustration. After having found your prices most competitive, we have decided to place our first order/ trial order for

Middle:

This will contain a detailed description of the order, such as specifications regarding the required quantity, quality, colour, model, packaging instructions, terms and conditions, cancellation clause if goods are not up to the mark, or arrive late etc., modes of payment—advance, partial, payment on delivery .

End:

Specifies the expected date of the supply of order and a future promise clause.

Example

Blow Plast

25th Nov 2008

Shanman Toys

.....

Trial Order

Dear Sir,

We thank you for your prompt reply to our inquiry for Shaman toys. As we find your prices reasonable, we wish to place a trial order for 50 sets of toys worth Rs.60,000/-, the details of which are enclosed.

Please note that the order must reach us by the first week of December. Excellent workmanship and use of non- hazardous colours would create a way for future orders.

Payment will be made on C.O.D. basis. We will expect a 10% discount on the initial order. Please note that goods supplied in excess, or of inferior quality, or in damaged condition will be returned to you at your cost.

Yours truly,

.....

Encl :

Detailed Order

The buyer, if satisfied, as mentioned earlier, may place a repeat order. But if s/he is dissatisfied on account of poor quality, service, or delayed delivery, s/he may be forced to cancel her/his order. In such cases, s/he may return the order and ask for a refund. Or, s/he may keep the order but ask permission to sell the goods at a discounted price.

Credit and Status Enquiry: At times the buyer may have to buy his products on credit; which means he may not be able to buy them on cash basis.

The word credit originates from the word Credo‘ which means I Believe‘. Credit is thus an arrangement between a buyer and a seller, by which the buyer can avail goods today and for which he can make payment at a later /future date.

Before granting credit to the prospective buyer, the seller will try and find out if the buyer is credit -worthy; whether s/he [the seller] can recover her/his amount from the buyer. This investigation about the credit-

standing of the buyer, or her/his credit worthiness is known as status inquiry.

If the information about buyer is positive, the seller grants her/him credit. If it is not, then the seller tactfully refuses to supply the order on credit, and induces the buyer to buy the product on cash basis.

Following are the steps involved in credit correspondence :

[Status Inquiry]:

1. A buyer applies to a seller for the supply of order on credit
2. The seller requests the buyer to furnish Trade References/Bank references/Financial Documents etc.
3. The buyer, after seeking referees' consent, supplies references to the seller.
4. The seller then takes up these references. which means she/he writes to these referees and inquires about the credit standing of the buyer.
5. Referees' replies form the next step in credit correspondence. The reply from the referee could be positive, negative, non-committal or partially favourable or unfavourable.

[Credit]:

6. Letter granting credit/ The seller grants credit to the buyer
7. Letter refusing to grant credit/The seller refuses to grant credit to the buyer.

Credit Correspondence:

Example 1: Seller requests References

| |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Seamless Computers</p> <p>8th Feb , 2007</p> <p>The Proprietor Compulink</p> <p>Dear Sir,</p> <p>Sub: Request for References.</p> <p>We thank you for your order of 1 February for 25 Acer laptop computers.</p> <p>Since this is your first order with us, we would like to inform you that it is our practice to ask customers for trade references.</p> <p>Would you therefore send us, by return post, the names and addresses of</p> |
|---|

two trade referees with whom you have been dealing in the recent past?

We look forward to serving you,

Yours truly

.....

Example 2: Customer Supplies References

Compulink

.....

20th Feb, 2007 Seamless

Computers

.....

Dear Sir,

Sub: Supplying References

We acknowledge the receipt of your letter asking us to supply the names of trade referees.

Example 3: Seller taking up references.

Seamless Computers

.....

21st Feb, 2007

M/s.....

.....

Dear Sir,

Sub: Status Inquiry

We are an established wholesale dealer in electronic equipment.....in Mumbai.

Mr. of Compulink , who has placed an order for 25 Acer laptop computers on six months credit with us, has given your name as one of his referees.

We request you to furnish us with information about the credit standing of Mr.....

We assure you that any information you give us will be treated as private and confidential.

Yours truly

.....

[The next stage is that of referees' response. The referee may give a positive, negative, partial or non-committal reply. While replying to a credit enquiry the referee will avoid commenting on the character of the applicant. He will restrict his comment to his personal experience of the applicant. He will avoid advising the seller. All such replies will be marked 'Private and Confidential'.]

Example 4: Referees' replies: (a) Favourable

M/s

.....

24th Feb, 2008

Seamless Computers

.....

.....

.....

We are happy to inform you that we have been doing business with them for the last 15 years and we have found them trustworthy and reliable. They have placed regular credit orders with us in the past and have always paid their dues on time.

We hope this information will be helpful and understand that you will treat it as confidential.

Yours truly

.....

b) Example 5: Unfavourable Reply

Private and Confidential

M/s

24th Feb, 2008 Seamless Computers

..... Dear Sir,

Sub: Reply to Credit Inquiry

We acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated
requesting credit information about

We have been dealing with them for almost ten years now. They placed regular orders with us in the past. While, initially, they always paid their dues on net dates, they occasionally did not do so. In fact, in recent times, after their failure to pay on time, we started dealing with them only on cash basis.

We feel that one should exercise caution while dealing with them.

We have exchanged this information in good faith, and we trust you will treat it as strictly private and confidential.

Example 6: Letter granting Credit

| |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: right;">Seamless Computers</p> <p>1st March, 2007 Compulink</p> <p>Dear Sir,</p> <p>Sub: Approving Credit Order</p> <p>We sincerely thank you for supplying the credit references so promptly.</p> <p>We are happy to inform you that we will supply your order for 25Acer Laptop computers on six months credit period.</p> <p>We are enclosing our catalogue, order form and a copy of credit application form for your convenience. Please send us, by return post, your specifications along with the signed credit form, so that we can supply your order within the next four working days.</p> <p>We hope this will mark the beginning of a long-standing business association between us.</p> <p>I remain, Yours truly</p> |
|---|

Example 7: Letter refusing Credit

One has to be tactful while writing negative replies. The seller generally refuses credit when he receives negative replies about the credit standing of the buyer. Yet, it is unwise to tell the buyer that s/he [seller] has received a negative reply about her/him [the buyer]. The seller, while saying no, tactfully avoids giving a direct negative response and tries to put the message in as positive terms as possible.

| |
|--|
| <p style="text-align: right;">Seamless Computers</p> <p>1st March, 2007 Compulink</p> |
|--|

Dear Sir,

We sincerely thank you for providing us the references so promptly.

We, however, have to inform you with regret that we cannot process your credit order as the market conditions are not favourable.

We have decided not to process any credit order for the next six months. As such, we will have to put your credit order on hold.

In the meanwhile, you could avail of a special 15% discount which we are offering to a few of our select customers, if you place your order before 20 March.

We look forward to serving you,

Yours truly

.....

4. Collection or Dunning Letters: Letters that are written to recover outstanding amounts are known as collection letters. Despite every possible care having been taken by the seller before supplying order on credit, it is possible that the buyer fails to repay on time. These letters are then written to collect such outstanding payments.

Since a credit order is extended after a cautious scrutiny, when the buyer fails to pay on time, it is believed that the buyer may be having a genuine difficulty due to which he has failed to make payment; or the lapse may be due to an oversight. Before declaring the buyer a defaulter, the seller wants to give him the benefit of doubt. Therefore, he sends letters in stages to enable the buyer to make payment. After having written three such letters, the seller takes a firm stand and demands payment within a stipulated period of time. He may also extend a helping hand to the buyer in order to make the buyer respond positively. Finally, when he is left with no alternative, he sends a warning letter, giving the buyer a specific period in which to settle his dues. If the buyer fails to pay up even then, legal action is taken against the defaulting buyer.

There are five stages of collection.

Examples of Collection Series: Letter No. 1

Letter No. 2

Matrix.....

5th Feb, 2008

Allwyn Fernandes

.....

Dear Sir,

Sub: Account No.....

We do not appear to have received payment of the above account for Rs. 25,000/-, already a month overdue.

It is possible that you have not received the statement of account sent to you on 1 January. We enclose a copy of the same, and request you to make payment before 15 February.

Yours truly

.....

Encl:

Copy of statement

Matrix.....

25th Feb, 2008

Allwyn Fernandes

..... Dear Sir,

Matrix.....

Sub: You're Outstanding Account: 1st reminder

We are surprised that we have neither received our payments for Rs. 25000/- outstanding on the above account, nor have we received any reply to our letter of 5th February, wherein we had enclosed a copy of the statement.

We once again enclose the copy of the statement. We hope that this letter will catch your immediate attention.

Yours truly

.....

Letter No. 3:

Matrix.....

15th March, 2008

Allwyn Fernandes

.....

Dear Sir,

Sub: Your Outstanding Account : 2 nd reminder

Our records indicate that your account is now more than 60 days past

dues. We feel concerned as you have not responded to either of our letters sent to you on ...5 and 25 February.....

We cannot allow this situation to continue indefinitely and therefore must press for immediate payment.

Considering our long association in the past, we are ready to give you an opportunity to explain, within the next two days, why the outstanding balance of Rs.25000/- could not be paid on time, failing which we would be forced to consider other alternatives.

Yours truly

.....

Letter No. 4

Matrix.....

1st April, 2008

Allwyn Fernandes

.....

Dear Sir,

Sub: Your Outstanding Account : 3rd reminder

We very much regret that we have received no reply to the follow-up letter we sent you on 15 March, requesting You to respond to our reminders for your outstanding payment of 25000/-. This total silence is not only going to cost us our business relationship but it is also going to affect your reputation. We are now left no option but to take recourse to law, unless you call us today to discuss a way out of this situation.

Yours truly

.....

Letter No. 5

Matrix.....

30th April, 2008

Allwyn Fernandes

.....

Dear Sir,

Sub: Your Outstanding Account: Final letter

It is with utmost regret that we have to inform you that, despite having

treated you with every possible consideration, we have neither heard from you, nor have we received the payment of Rs.25000/- still outstanding on your account with us.

We are convinced that we have shown sufficient patience, but we are now left with no option but to recover payment at law. The matter will now be, regretfully, placed in the hands of our solicitors.

Yours truly

.....

[These letters form the substance of routine external correspondence in the organization. While letters of inquiry have almost become a part of history, order letters are sent in customized and standard formats. Credit and collection letters are generally never handled by junior staff. They are handled by either the senior executives who have the requisite experience, or by the Company Secretary or a more competent authority.]

Complaints, Claims And Adjustments Letter

Learning objectives:

- To enable students to draft letters of complaint and claims
- To enable students to draft letters of adjustment

Complaints and Claims:

Introduction:

i) What is a complaint letter?:

A complaint letter is written by a dissatisfied customer, expecting the organization to resolve the problem by offering him/her adequate compensation. The contention may be with regard to the quality, quantity, pricing or after-sales service in case of a product. It may be related to the nature, competence, or efficiency in case of a service. The letter should logically explain the dispute, supported by documents and other kinds of evidence.

ii) What is a claim?:

A claim may be defined as a demand of action made by a customer to compensate him/her for any mechanical, physical or functional defect in a product purchased, and perceived inadequacies in service obtained.

Granting claims and making adjustments:

Being sensitive to the concerns and demands of customers, promptly handling their claims, and amicably resolving problems reap obvious benefits for an organization. In a competitive marketplace, it earns the goodwill and loyalty of customers. Good customer relations are a priority.

for any organisation which wants to grow. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, aids consumers to recover damages, prompting companies to take appropriate steps to resolve customer complaints.

It is well within the rights of an organisation to verify the complaint and offer compensation only when it is found genuine. A response to a complaint letter detailing action taken is called a letter of adjustment.

iii) When does a customer make a complaint?

A customer complains when

- He is dissatisfied with the quality or quantity of the product
- The pricing is incorrect or there is a mistake in billing
- The packing is not to standard specifications for a particular product
- The order arrives late, is in excess, in a damaged condition, or is different from the one placed
- He is dissatisfied with the service, or after-sales service

Apart from these, there could be many other situations when a customer may have to take recourse to such letters.

II. Drafting a Letter of Complaint:

While drafting a complaint letter, one must be rational and use reason instead of emotions. Getting a timely and adequate compensation depends on whether the dispute is explained and phrased logically. The writer could

- i. Begin with a clear statement of a problem sequentially
- ii. Support his claim with documents, endorsements and establish his contention
- iii. Clearly state what kinds of compensation he expects

Or

- i. Begin by providing the details of order
- ii. State the nature of complaint
- iii. Suggest action/compensation

Example 1:

Abhiram Athwale 4,
Jeevan Vikas, Dadar Central,
Mumbai 400006.

December 25, 2007

The Manager,
Canberry India, Worli,
Mumbai 400 018.

Dear Sir,

Sub: Complaint against substandard quality of Fruit'n'Nut Chocolates

This is to bring to your notice that the above-mentioned chocolates were found to contain worms. The samples in question, 20 gift-boxes of chocolates, were purchased on December 24, from the famous 'Deal4' shop, located in Dadar, Mumbai. I would like to lodge an official complaint about the quality of these 'Fruit n Nut Chocolates' supplied by your company which manufactures them.

The chocolates were purchased for distribution in an orphanage. To our utter disgust and shock, each box opened was found infested with worms. The chocolates were well within the printed date of expiry, which is February 20, 2008.

Your chocolates pose a great health risk for consumers, most of whom may be children. I request you to withdraw the entire lot from the market immediately, and compensate me with fresh batches of the same chocolates.

Yours truly, Abhiram Athwale

II. Drafting a Letter of Adjustment / Settlement

A letter of adjustment has three goals:

1. To reach out to the customer and verify the complaint
2. To explain the cause / reason behind the inadequacies in product or service
3. To regain the confidence of the customer and promote further business

Letters of Adjustment:

A letter of adjustment is written to

1. Acknowledge the receipt of the letter of complaint and thank the customer for writing it

2. Express regret for the cause of complaint 3. explain the situation
4. State the action taken.
5. Communicate one's genuine concern

Example 1: Response to complaint letter:

Cranberry India Ltd.
Worli, Mumbai

Ref no.320/ cw/01

Mr Abhiram Athwale, 4, Jeevan Vikas, Dadar Central, Mumbai 400 006.

Dec 26, 2007

Dear Sir,

Response to your Letter of Complaint about Fruit'n' Nut Chocolates.

We sincerely thank you for informing us about worm infestation in the Gift Boxes of Fruit'n'Nut chocolates, and deeply regret the inconvenience caused to you by this. Following your letter, we have immediately withdrawn the entire batch of chocolates from markets across the country.

We are a responsible corporate concern and since this is indeed a very serious issue as rightly pointed out by you, we immediately launched an investigation into the matter.

We were relieved to find that there was nothing wrong with the packaging or manufacturing processes. The chocolates were stored in improper temperature, which made them soggy and moist, leading to the germination of worms.

On inquiring, our distributors claimed that prolonged periods of power-cuts led to the current crisis. Now, we have convened a meeting of our distributors along with our R&D experts to take appropriate measures so that such a situation never recurs.

As a token of our appreciation of your concern, we send you a carton of fresh chocolates which you can distribute among the orphanage kids.

We once again apologize for the inconvenience caused.

Warm Regards
General Manager

Example 2 : Complaint regarding Letter

3, Silver Moon Apts.
Baba D'souza Marg
Khar [W]
Mumbai 053.

18th Sept, 2008

HSCC Bank
16th Road, Khar Danda,
Khar [W], Mumbai 400 053.

Dear Madam,

I am a customer of your bank, having a Third Party Overseas Transfer [TPOT] Account, (number 55786657).

I have not been able to operate my account for the last two days as your server is down. Since my business runs on the Internet, the non-transfer of funds for the last two days has caused me a great deal of inconvenience and loss of customer confidence.

It is difficult to believe that a prime bank like HSCC does not have any alternative and can do nothing for its customers, except to let them suffer.

I request you to resolve the matter immediately, or I will have no choice but to withdraw business from your bank and shift my account another more efficient bank.

Yours faithfully,

M. Alvares

Example 3 : Adjustment Letter

HSCC Bank
16th Road, Khar
Danda, Khar [W],
Mumbai 400 053.

Ref No. 320/cw/02

20th Sept, 2021

Mrs. Margaret Alvares 3,
Silver Moon Apts. Baba D'souza Marg
Khar [W]
Mumbai 400 053.

Dear Madam,

We thank you for your letter dated September 18. We deeply regret the technical snag that inconvenienced many of our valuable customers.

We fully understand the seriousness of the matter and welcome your suggestion for an alternative arrangement, should the server fail in future. Our technical team is working on such an alternative, and we promise that there will be no such technical breakdowns in future.

We once again thank you for being our valued customer and expect your continued patronage.

Sincere regards,

Yours truly,
Mrs. Alia Sinha,
Branch Manager,
HSCC, Khar

Example 4: Letter of Complaint: Poor Quality

SR Home Appliances, Kandivali [W],
Mumbai 400068
Tel: (022) 66677888

19th Sept, 2008

The Proprietor,
Kitchen King Services, Kanjur Marg [W], 4000067

SUB: Substandard quality of steel kitchenware.

Sir.

We have been regular buyers of kitchenware from you for the past five years, but during the past two months, we have received many complaints about the quality of the stainless steel utensils. Most customers have complained that these steel utensils rust in no time. To be precise, we have had to replace six such orders in order to satisfy our customers. This is a matter of serious concern to us, as this may affect our image adversely. If the word spreads, it will immediately result in loss of business.

We are sending back the utensils exchanged. We expect you to replace these within 15 days. We also request you to take necessary steps and ensure that the next lot sent to us is of standard quality.

Yours sincerely,
..... Manager,
SR Home Appliances.

Example 5: Response to Letter of Complaint: Poor Quality

The Proprietor,
Kitchen King Services,
Kanjur Marg [W],
Mumbai-4000067.

26th Sept, 2008

SR Home Appliances,
Kandivali [W],
Mumbai 400068.
Tel: 2 66677888

Ref. No. 321/cw/04 Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of complaint dated September 19, 2008. We indeed regret the poor quality of the steel kitchenware supplied to you, and sincerely apologize for the problems you had to face.

Following a labour dispute we had to temporarily stop our production for a fortnight, and were compelled to make alternate arrangements with the renowned exporters, Guarantee Steels, for supplying the merchandise to all our customers. We never doubted the quality of their product, but, having received your complaint, we will now take up the matter with them.

I may also inform you that the dispute in our plant has been resolved, and we will shortly resume supplies. We are sending you the replacement order at our earliest.

Yours faithfully,

M. Subramanyam,
Proprietor.

III. Handling Negative Messages: Refusal to Settle Claims:

It is not possible for a seller to grant all the claims, particularly when the demand of the customer is unreasonable. To communicate politely to the customer/s one's inability to accede to the unreasonable demands, and still retain their goodwill is a challenging task.

To draft such a letter is a delicate matter. One's refusal must not translate into blaming the customer, even if he is at fault. The seller must sound concerned and understanding, and try to be as objective as possible in his explanation.

Example 1: Refusing Adjustment

Dear Sir,

We are sorry to learn that the music system you purchased under bill no 1234, on February 25, 2008 has developed technical defects. We find that you have asked us for a replacement.

In this connection, however, we must bring to your notice that according to the conditions of warranty, if any device is found defective, it must be brought back directly to the original seller. Our inspection reveals that you had called a local mechanic who tampered with the system. We regret to communicate to you that we cannot grant you any relief under these circumstances.

We would like to suggest that you consult our technical department, who can repair the defect, but against payment of charges.

Yours truly

.....

Tasks:

Draft a complaint letter for the following situations:

1. S.K. Architecture placed a large order with Jayanti Caterers for snacks that led to food poisoning after consumption.
2. Rohit Das purchased a collection of DVDs from Sony Entertainment at a total cost of Rs. 2000/-, which have turned out to be blank.
3. Alviras purchased groceries from Indiabulls for Rs. 2500/ for home delivery. The bill, however, showed the amount as Rs. 3500.
4. Mr. Gopinath placed an order for a Kohli Food Processor by paying Rs.5000/-. The food processor makes alarming noise while grinding.
5. You purchased two fruit drink cans from Bizz Bazaar under the 'Buy One Get One Free' offer. The date on both the containers, however, is well past their expiry date.

Draft an adjustment letter for the following situations:

1. Mrs. Anita Lamba has written to inform you that the carton of paints she received from you has less number of items than she had placed order for.
2. Messrs. Tare and Bros. have written to Abha Sales that the furniture they had ordered has arrived in a damaged condition.

3. Mrs. Geeta Chandra has asked for replacement of her CCM washing machine which caught fire as soon as it was switched on.
4. Major Anand has asked for the complete refund of his ticket fare, as the airline overbooked the tickets and failed to accommodate him on the flight.
5. A student from Adtech has written to Adtech Computer Centre asking for full refund of fees as the centre failed to provide him with the necessary practice time and hands-on experience as promised in the prospectus.
6. Draft a letter refusing to make adjustment for the following situations:
7. A customer has complained that he placed an order for a navy blue carpet he had selected from the catalogue. The carpet he received, however, is of a different shade of blue and not the one he had selected.
8. You have received a letter from Ahuja and Sons complaining about the copier they purchased a month ago, which returns the paper blank.

CONSUMER GRIEVANCE LETTERS

Learning objectives:

- To make students aware of their rights as consumers.
- To acquaint students with the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, and the procedure for filing a complaint under the CPA

Introduction:

I. What is Consumer Guidance?:

Consumer Guidance means imparting education, information, instruction and training to consumers with regard to their buying activities. The first and foremost objective of the Consumer Guidance Cell is to make consumers aware that they have legitimate rights as consumers. The purpose of the Endeavour is to make consumers aware about the possible malpractices and the consequent victimization on account of their lack of knowledge about the consumer's rights. In a country like India, a majority of consumers are uneducated, poor and unorganized. They fall an easy prey to the exploitative practices of traders. Consumer education equips them to exercise their rights as consumers. Consumer organizations work towards consumer education, establishment of legal redressal systems, appropriate punitive measures against offenders and, in general, for protection of consumers from the malpractices in the commercial world.

In this chapter, you are going to understand the CPA [Consumer Protection Act] of 1986 the law that revolutionised the life of a consumer, and also learn how to redress consumer complaints.

[It has been decided by the Government of India to celebrate December 24 as the National Consumer Day in India. It was on this day that the President of India gave assent to the Consumer Protection Act in 1986. The World Consumers Rights day is celebrated all over the world on March 15.]

I. THE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 1986:

Though a consumer is ideally the king, he has been the most vulnerable entity in the entire marketing system in India. He has been subjected to the worst kind of exploitation at the hands of mighty traders. The Government of India enacted a comprehensive legislation called The Consumer Protection Act, in order to safeguard the interests of consumers. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, applies to all goods and services, excluding goods for resale or for commercial purpose, and services that are rendered free of charge and under a contract for personal service. The provisions of the Act are compensatory in nature. It covers public, private, joint and cooperative sectors.

II. Who is a Consumer?:

According to the act, "A consumer is any person who buys any goods for a consideration [price], and is the user of such goods, where the use is with the approval of the buyer, any person who hires/avails of any service for a consideration [price], and any beneficiary of such services, where such services are availed of with the approval of the person hiring the service. [www.cgi.com]"

This means that if Mrs. Pandya purchased a car for her personal use by making full payment, she is a consumer. If she has made a partial payment, or paid her first installment of Rs. 45000/, she is still a consumer. If Mrs. Pandya availed herself of any services – like airline, railways, medical treatment, she is a consumer. However, if she is a trader, who has purchased a car with an intention to sell, she is not a consumer.

Goods: The act defines Goods as any movable property which also includes shares, but does not include any auction able claims.

Service: It defines Service as service of any description such as banking, insurance, transport, processing, housing construction, supply of electrical energy, entertainment, board or lodging.

III. Rights of the Consumer: CPA has framed the following rights of the consumer:

- Right to be protected against the marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life and property.
- Right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods or services, so as to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices.

- Right to be assured of, wherever possible, access to a variety of goods and services at competitive prices.
- Right to be heard and to be assured that consumers' interests will receive due consideration at appropriate forums.
- Right to seek redressal against unfair trade practices and unscrupulous exploitation of consumers.
- Right to consumer education.

IV. Nature of complaint: A consumer can complain against

- i. Any unfair trade practice or restrictive trade practice adopted by the trader
- ii. Defective goods
- iii. Deficiency in service
- iv. Excess price charged by the trader
- v. Unlawful sale of goods which is hazardous to life and safety when used.

V. How to lodge a Complaint?:

A complaint, handwritten or typed, can be filed by a consumer to a registered consumer organisation, Central or State Government, and by one or more consumers where there are numerous consumers having the same interest. No stamp or court fee is needed. The nature of complaint must be clearly mentioned, as well as the relief [compensation] sought by the consumer. Complaint must be in quadruplicate [four copies], in district forum or state commission. Else, additional copies are required to be filed.

- Complaint is to be filed within two years of buying the product or using the service.
- Complaint needs to be in writing, and should be acknowledged. Letters should be sent by registered post or should be hand-delivered against acknowledgement.
- In the complaint, consumer should clearly mention the name and address of the person who is complaining and against whom the complaint is being filed.
- Copies of relevant documents must be enclosed. The consumer must mention details of the problem and the demand on the company for compensation. This could be replacement of the product, removal of the defect, refund of money, or compensation for expenses incurred and for physical/mental torture. However, he has to ensure that the claims are reasonable.

- The consumer must preserve all bills, receipts and proof of correspondence related to the case. He must avoid using voice mail or telephone because such communications cannot be proved.
- The complaint can be in any Indian language, but it is better to use English.
- There is no compulsion to hire a lawyer. Main cost consists of correspondence and travelling to consumer forum for the hearing.

Grant of relief [Nature of compensation]: CPA provides for following types of compensation.

- Repair of defective goods
- Replacement of defective goods
- Refund of the price paid for the defective goods or service
- Removal of deficiency in service
- Refund of extra money charged
- Withdrawal of goods hazardous to life and safety
- Compensation for the loss or injury suffered by the consumer due to negligence of the opposite party
- Adequate cost of filing and pursuing the complaint

Normally, complaints should be decided within 90 days from the date of notice issued to the opposite party. Where a sample of any goods is required to be tested, a complaint is required to be disposed of within 150 days; it may take more time due to practical problems.

VI. Consumer Protection Councils:

Councils have been set up in all States and at the Centre to promote and protect the rights and interests of consumers. These councils are advisory in nature and can play an important role in recommending consumer oriented policies to the State and Central Governments.

The objective of the act is to:

- i. Provide simple, speedy, inexpensive redressal to consumer grievances.
- ii. Provide this three-tier quasi judicial machinery at the national, state and district level

National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission:

Deals with claims above Rs. 1 crore and above

Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission or State Commission: Deals with claims from Rs.20 lakhs to 1 crore

Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum or District Forum:

Deals with claims upto Rs.20 Lakhs.

The set-up of the consumer forum is geared to provide relief to both parties, and discourage long litigation. In a process called 'informal adjudication', forum officials mediate between the two parties and urge compromise. The forum is expected to dispose of a complaint within three months from the date on which notice is given to the opposite party. On receiving a complaint, the company against whom the complaint is received is intimated, with a copy of the complaint letter. The concerned company is supposed to reply within 45 days of receiving the notice from the forum. Once the company sends its reply, the Forum can set the date for a hearing, where the complainant and the opposite party can present their arguments. If the opposite party does not appear in court despite repeated notices and reminders, the court may decide the matter in its absence and give an ex-parte decision. The Forum can sentence the party to a maximum of three years' imprisonment and impose a fine of Rs. 10,000. The Forum can also issue warrants to produce defaulters in court. It can use the police and revenue departments to enforce orders.

One should once again note that consumer courts provide redress only in cases of products or services for **personal use**. They do not entertain complaints about, or provide any redress for, defects in products used **for commercial purposes**.

VII. Some of the active consumer organisations: Mumbai Grahak Panchayat:

Grahak Bhavan, Sant Dhyaneswar Marg,

Juhu Vile Parle Development Scheme, Near Cooper Hospital, Mumbai 400056. **Tel:** 022-6209319.

Consumer Guidance Society of India:

J' Hutment, Mahapalika Marg, Opp Cama and Albless Hospital,

Mumbai 400001. **Tel:** 022-2621612

Common Cause:

A-31, West End, New Delhi 110021.

Tel: 011-6876666.

Voluntary Organisation in Interest of Consumer Education:

F-71, Lajpat Nagar II, New Delhi 110024.

Tel: 011-6918969/6315375.

In Mumbai and Thane complaints at the district level should be addressed to:

1. The President [City Limits],

Bombay District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum

Madhu Industrial Estate, 1 st floor, Panduranga Budhkar Marg,

Worli, Mumbai 400 013.

**2. The President [Suburban Limits] Consumer Redressal Forum
Sudarshan Building,**

Gokhale Road,

Dadar, Mumbai 400028

3. The President

District Consumer Redressal Forum, 2 nd floor Collector's Office, Court
Naka

Thane [W], 400601

II. Drafting of Redress letters under Consumer Guidance:

A consumer redress letter is drafted like any complaint letter. However, it is only after the seller has ignored, or failed to respond to a customer's complaint, that the customer should approach the consumer forum. He should give all the details of the complaint and substantiate them with all the necessary documents. He should then request the consumer redress cell to take up his matter on his behalf and ask for justice. He should also clearly state the kind of compensation he has in mind.

There is a format in which consumer guidance letters are generally drafted. This includes

- a) The name of the complainant
- b) The name of the company/organization/concern i.e. the opposite party against whom the complaint is being made.
- c) The nature of the complaint.
- d) Prayer i.e. Terms of Compensation

Example 1: Consumer Redress Letters

Mr. Amar Khan
B-16, Alam Gir Apts.
Azad Rd. Thane[W] , 401203. September 15, 2008
The President
Consumer Guidance Redressal Forum
.....

Complainant: Mr. Amar Khan

Dispute Against / Opposite Party: Mohata Builders Nature of Complaint:
Levying of excess charges.

Dear Sir,

I request you to take up my dispute with Mohata Builders, who have failed to give me the possession of my flat at 5 B, Ajanta Gardens situated at Gorai Rd, Boriwali [W], as promised.

I had entered into a proper agreement with Mohata Builders, when I booked a one BHK flat admeasuring 540 sq ft for Rs. 20 lakhs, in their newly constructed housing scheme at Gorai. In accordance with the terms of agreement, I paid after the payment of my last installment on 18th December, 2007, on requesting the keys to the flat, I was told by the supervisor that I would be given the keys on 2nd February, as some work was still to be completed. In good faith I agreed to wait till 2nd February, 2008.

When I approached them on 7th February, 2008, the supervisor made a demand of an additional amount of Rs.1 lakh, towards the increased cost of construction. On my refusing to pay the extra amount, he refused to hand over the keys to me.

Almost eight months have passed and I have still not been given the possession of the flat. After having failed to meet the Mohatas in person, I sent them three registered letters, to which I have received no answer till date.

I, therefore, request you to take up my matter and help me in getting the following compensation:

1. Immediate possession of my flat
2. The amount paid towards rent at Rs. 15,000/ per month for the last 8 months
3. A written apology for the harassment I have been subjected to

I am enclosing

1. A Copy of the registered agreement

2. Receipts of the payments made
3. Copies of the registered letters and postal receipts I hope to receive a sympathetic response soon.

Yours truly

.....

Example 2: Consumer Product:

Mrs. Anaita Dewani
C-6, Bella Donna Apts. Bhanushali Rd, Khar [w] Mumbai 4000013.
February 10, 2009 The President
District Consumer Forum
.....

Opposite Party: Waly's Departmental Store Nature of Complaint: Delivery of a different model of Videocon TV

Dear Sir,

I seek your assistance in solving my dispute with the famous Waly's Departmental Stores, at Bandra [W].

On 23rd December, 2008, I purchased a 51 inches Videocon Plasma T.V., [brand name Tiara], for Rs.1 lakh 10 thousand, from Wali's Stores at Bandra [W]. Since the store promised home delivery, I left the store after making the payment in cash.

Wali's Stores made the delivery after two days. On opening the carton, however, I realized it was not the brand that I had selected and paid for. The store had sent me a 49 inches Sim Sim brand, instead of the 51 inches Tiara brand.

I refused to sign the delivery papers and rang up Wali's Stores for replacement of the TV. But the manager refused to accept the fact that I had selected a model different from the one that was delivered to me.

After this, I first tried to personally contact and explain the problem to the management, but to no avail. Subsequently, I sent two registered letters notifying my complaint in detail, and asking for a replacement. I have not received any response from the store's management till date.

I, therefore, request you to intervene and help me in getting replacement of the TV that I was wrongfully delivered. I also want a written apology and an award of Rs. 2000/ towards all the expenses that I have incurred in pursuing this matter.

I am enclosing the receipt for payment, the receipts of the registered letters, and photocopies of the letters sent.

I hope to receive your immediate attention. Yours truly,

Anaita Dewani

Enclosures:

1. Receipts of payment
2. Receipts of the registered letters
3. Photocopies of the registered letters

Example 3:

Magaza Mauni A/20, Amar Apts. Meera Iyer Road Andheri (E) Mumbai
400099. 20th August 200

The President

District Consumer Redressal Forum Mumbai

Complainant : Mrs. Magaza Mauni

Opposite Party : Dodophone Service Provider.

Nature of Complaint:

1. Service provider selling personal data.
2. Levying charges for the schemes one has not Dear Sir,

This is to request you to take up the matter of the privacy issues of customers like me with Dodophone Service provider.

I am a post-paid customer of Dodophone telecom. I have been harassed by sales calls from various insurance and share-broking agencies for the purchase of their product. Sometimes I receive as many as 25 calls a day.

On my enquiring with one such agent I realized that the company had all my personal data, which I had not parted with. This raises serious doubts about the safety of our

My second issue is that of the service provider forcing certain schemes, such as 'Laugh-a-minute' Scheme, on unsuspecting customers without their prior consent, and then levying extra charges for them. It is bad enough being forced to listen to senseless jokes, and then, being asked to pay for them really hurts.

I had taken up both the issues with my service provider. On receiving no satisfactory response, I sent three complaints via e-mail to their on-line grievance-cell. It is two months since I did so, but I have received no response from them.

I, therefore, request you to take up this matter and put a stop to the exploitation of customers like me.

I request

1. Refund of all the extra-charges levied on me beginning March 2007.
2. Devising of a code of conduct where customer-consent becomes mandatory.

I am enclosing my bills and print outs of the e-mails I sent to Dodophone telecom.

With regards,

Yours truly, Magaza Mauni

Enclosures:

Bills [3]

E-mail Print Outs [3]

Tasks :

Draft redressal letters for the following situations:

1. You were admitted to Holy Heart hospital for an appendix operation. On receiving bills you realize that you have been charged for 10 days' stay at the hospital, instead of the actual stay of 7 days. Your oral and written protests have gone unheard, and you were compelled to pay the levied amount in order to reclaim your medical reports, bills and other documents.
2. You had to appear for an interview in Mumbai. You had booked your flight ticket from Kolkata on Hi Fli Airlines, a low cost carrier, one day prior to the interview. On reaching the airport you were informed by the airline, which had overbooked itself, that there was no seat on the flight, and that you could not fly on the same day. You tried getting the refund but the staff at the counter refused to reimburse the money, claiming that you had reported late, although this was not so. You bought a ticket on another airline, as you had to reach Mumbai by a certain time. This, however, has forced you to incur huge and unexpected expenditure.
3. You purchased a brand new XYZ laptop computer/ cell hone/ washing machine/ceiling fan from the much advertised Topsy Turvy Mall, which has turned out to be a defective piece. Your personal visits to the mall for its replacement have not produced any results.
4. Your mobile service provider has charged you Rs.500/- for a Latest Ringtones on your Mobile' facility, when you had not subscribed for it.
5. You took admission, by paying Rs. 7000/, for a course scheduled to start in January. It did not start on the promised date, owing to less number of enrolments. The organization has refused to return your money on the pretext that it would start the course as soon as they

enrolled sufficient number of enough number of students. Two months have elapsed and the course has still not started.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION LETTERS

Learning objectives:

To make students aware of the provisions of the RTI Act

To enable students to draft RTI letters

In a government of responsibility like ours, where the agents of the public must be responsible for their conduct, there can be but a few secrets. The people of this country have a right to know every public act, everything that is done in a public way by their public functionaries. They are entitled to know the particulars of every public transaction in all its bearings.

[Supreme Court in State of UP vs Raj Narain in 1975, Posted by RTI Act 2005 on June 25, 2006]

What we have is an elective democracy, not a participatory democracy. This is because we have missed the essence of Lokshahi which means Logon ki Shahenshahi. The essence of democracy is that the individual Citizen is a sovereign in her/his own right, and s/he gives up part of the sovereignty to the State, in return for which s/he gets the rule of law. This respect for YOU, the sovereign Citizen of India, and for the rule of law has been missed completely. Our Institutions have become playgrounds of the powerful, where the individual is helpless. If a Citizen approaches an elected representative, he may or may not get a hearing in 24 hours; if she/he writes to a Public servant s/he may or may not get an answer in 12 days; and if she approaches the Courts a BMW will metamorphose into a truck and the final decision will probably be obtained after a decade. The individual Citizen, instead of being respected, has become the bechara. If Tilak were here today he would have again said, Swaraj ha maza janmasiddh hakk ahe, ani to me milawnarch, karan Swaraj keva aalach nahi. 15th August, 1947 only saw a transfer of Raj from the whites to the browns.

[This is an extract from Shailesh Gandhi's speech, via e - mail, while accepting the Nani Palkhiwala Memorial Award on January 12, 2008.]

The Right to Information Act:

I. Introduction:

The common citizen of India owes a debt to activist Shailesh Gandhi and, prior to him, to many others, who fought for the Right to Information Act and brought it into force. Its enactment, on 12 October 2005, by the Indian Parliament, in a sense is a culmination of a movement for the empowerment of the common man that had begun in 1990.

Purpose of the RTI Act:

An average citizen in India is at the mercy of authority that exploits him on account of his lack of information. Instances of a common man having to bribe the authority to collect the dead body of a relative from a government morgue, to collect birth/ employment/death certificate, to avail of a ration card, passport or pension has become a common norm. There are enumerable examples where he has become a victim at the hands of unscrupulous officials. With the RTI, it is now possible to make public servants accountable and to bring in transparency in the functioning of the government. The RTI empowers the common citizen with his fundamental right to question the authority and make it answerable. To be able to exercise this right, it is essential that students, who are the future of Indian democracy, become aware of the RTI Act and its provisions.

The RTI ACT [2005]:

The RTI Act mandates timely response to citizen requests for government information. Any ordinary citizen, regardless of caste or creed, can file a Right to Information application and the Government of India is compelled to respond.

1. What does Information mean?:

Information means any material, in any form that includes records, documents, memos, e-mails, opinions, advices, press releases, circulars, orders, logbooks, contracts, reports, papers, samples, models, data material held in any electronic form, and information relating to any private body, which can be accessed by a public authority under any other law for the time being in force, but does not include file notings [S.2(1)].

2. What does Right to Information mean?:

It includes the right to:

- Inspect works, documents, and records.
- Take notes, extracts or certified copies of documents or records.
- Take certified sample material.
- Obtain information in the form of printouts, diskettes, floppies, tapes, videocassettes, or in any other electronic mode, or through printouts. [S.2(1)]

3. What is the Application Procedure for requesting information ?

- Apply in writing or through electronic means in English or Hindi or in the official language of the area, to the PIO [Public Information Officer], specifying the particulars of the information sought.
- Reasons for seeking information are not required to be given;

- Pay fees as may be prescribed (if not belonging to the below poverty line category).

4. What is the time limit to get the information?

- 30 days from the date of application
- 48 hours for information concerning the life and liberty of a person
- 5 days shall be added to the above response time, in case the application for information is given to Assistant Public Information Officer.
- If the interests of a third party are involved, then time limit will be 40 days (maximum period + time given to the party to make representation).
- Failure to provide information within the specified period is deemed a refusal.

5. What are the penalty provisions?:

Every PIO will be liable for a fine of Rs. 250/- per day, up to a maximum of Rs. 25,000/-, for

- Not accepting an application
- Delaying information release without reasonable cause
- Malafidely denying information
- Knowingly giving incomplete, incorrect, misleading information
- Destroying information that has been requested
- Obstructing furnishing of information in any manner.

The Information Commission (IC) at the Centre and the State levels will have the power to impose this penalty. The Information Commission can also recommend disciplinary action for violation of the law against an erring PIO. (S.20)

II. How to file an RTI Application?:

The process of filing the RTI query is simple.

Step 1

The letter asking for information must be addressed to the concerned Public Information Officer (PIO). In the following example the PIO is from the Ministry of Communications and Technology. His address is:

Shri B.B.Bahl,
Joint Director and PIO (RTI) Office of PIO (RTI)

Room No 1016 Electronics Niketan Department of Information Technology (DIT)

Ministry of Communications and Information Technology 6, CGO Complex, New Delhi

Tel: 011-24301116

Fax: 011-24363099

Email: pio.dithq@mit.gov.in

Business Correspondence
Trade Letters

Step 2

The subject of the letter could, for example, read like this:

SUB: Request to Information Regarding the Blocking of Internet domains

SUB: Request to information regarding the acquisition of land at Chinch Bhuvan Nagpur for the proposed Mihan Cargo-hub project.

The letter could begin thus:

I would like to use the Right to Information Act to ascertain the following:

1. Has there been a directive issued by the Ministry of Communications & Information Technology to block the domains <http://www.blogspot.com>, <http://www.typepad.com> and <http://www.geocities.com>?
2. If so, why has this blanket block come into force?
3. Why have these particular domain names been specifically blocked?

Or

I own a 1500 sq ft plot of land at Chinch Bhuvan, which I am told has been acquired by the Aviation Ministry for the proposed cargo hub project. Could you please show me the notification that states this?

1. Could you tell me if the Government of India has devised any compensation plan for the land thus acquired?
2. Who is the competent authority whom we could approach? Please give us the names, addresses, contact details of the authority appointed to handle these issues.

Note: Under the RTI Act, 2005, *you are not compelled to give any reason for your application*. So you can only include the questions if you like.

Step 3:

Include your name and your full postal address at the end of the letter. This is extremely vital, so that the PIO can respond to your request. The information will be sent to you via post.

Step 4:

Go to your nearest post office. A list of post offices accepting RTI applications is given here: <http://www.indiapost.gov.in/rtimanual16a.html>

Step 5:

Submit your application and pay Rs.10 at one of the eligible Post Offices and ensure that you get your receipt. This is once again **vital** as proof of your application. Make copies of your application for your future reference.

Step 6:

Come home, and wait for the response. Allow 5 days for the Post Office to deliver the application to the PIO concerned, and 30 days after that for the PIO to respond to you. So within 35 days, the **PIO MUST RESPOND**.

Sample Form [<http://www.rtiindia.org> Page 1]

**THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT 2005
APPLICATION FOR OBTAINING INFORMATION**

Date:

By speed Post AD

FILE NO.: YEAR:

Central Public Information Officer Regional Passport Office, Place

1. Name of the applicant:
2. Full address [with phone No.]:
3. Particulars of information required : as per enclosed list.
4. Details of payment of filing fees:

Indian Postal Order No. dated for Rs.10/- favouring Regional Passport Officer [payable at place of submitting application] is enclosed.

OR

photocopy of my BPL card/certificate is enclosed for exemption from fees.

Details of enclosures if any:

5. Photocopy of application dated issue/renewal of passport.
6. Please rush the information to me by speed/registered post.

Signature of Applicant

[This format is prepared by an NGO in order to help people. It can be downloaded from the sites mentioned in the chapter. However, it is not necessary that the application should be made in this format only. Any hand written or typed letter will also be accepted.]

Sample Application Letter Example 1:

Shri B.B.Bahl

Joint Director and PIO (RTI) Office of PIO (RTI)
Room No 1016, Electronics Niketan Department of Information
Technology (DIT)
Ministry of Communications and Information Technology 6, CGO
Complex, New Delhi
Date: <Enter Date Here>

Sub: Information regarding the blocking of internet website domains

Dear Sir,

This is to bring to your notice that I, along with several other internet users across the country, am unable to access the following websites:

<http://www.blogspot.com> <http://www.geocities.com>
<http://www.typepad.com>

As well as the following sub-domains: <http://sub-domain.blogspot.com>
<http://sub-domain.typepad.com>

On asking the relevant ISPs, their users were told that these websites have been blocked under a directive of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India.

I would like to use the Right to Information Act to ascertain the following:

1. Has there been any such directive issued by the Ministry of Communications & Information Technology?
2. If so, why has this ban come into force?
3. Why have these particular domain names been specifically banned?
4. When will this ban cease to exist?
5. If no such directive has been issued, why are these websites being blocked?
6. Who is responsible for ensuring that Indian citizens have the freedom to access these websites?
7. If there has been a directive from the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to block these websites, then, **considering the fact that most of the websites blocked do not contain pornography, speeches of hate, contempt, slander or**

defamation, or promote gambling, racism, violence or terrorism, the question arises whether the Ministry of Communications and Information technology is violating articles 14, 19, and 21 of the Constitution of India by issuing such a directive.

8. Please provide a photocopy of all the documents relating to the questions above, including but not limited to:
 - a. The directive issued by the concerned Ministry to Internet Service Providers
 - b. The list of all the specific domain names that have been blocked
 - c. The Act under which the Government of India is empowered to block domain names in India.

I must emphasize here that these websites are used by thousands of ordinary Indian citizens to express their views, thoughts and ideas. Indian Citizens have the right to express their views freely, and to have an unhindered exchange of thoughts and ideas.

Blocking these websites universally and not allowing Indian Citizens to read any of them is tantamount to hindering the freedom of expression of thousands of ordinary Indian citizens.

I request you to kindly look into this matter. Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

<Name Here>

<Address Here>

[Courtesy : Mr. Shivam.Vij, Journalist, Tehelka]

Example 2:

To enquire about the Status of the Passport

[Sample Form Downloaded from <http://www.rtiindia.org> Page 2]

List of information requested by under RTI

ACT 2005. Application dated pertaining to his file no and year for issue/renewal of passport.

1. Please inform me about/Please furnish me with the daily progress made on my application till date of your reply.
2. Names, designations and office addresses of the officials with whom my application was lying during this period, and date wise period with each official and action taken by him/her.

3. Please give evidence of receipt and dispatch of my application in the office of each of these officials.
4. Please inform me, according to your rules or citizens' charter or any other order, the number of days in which such a matter should have been dealt with and resolved. Please also provide a copy of these rules.
5. As the officials have not adhered to the time limit mentioned in the rules and are guilty of violating these rules, please give a copy of their conduct rules and details of action taken by the RPO against erring officials.
6. In case no action has been initiated for dereliction of duties against erring officials, the reasons be made known to me.
7. Please inform me the name of the police station/dept to whom application was referred for police verification with outward number, date of dispatch and date when reply was received by you. Photocopy of letter addressed to police for verification and proof of mailing be submitted to me.
8. Please let me know when I am likely to receive my passport.
9. Please inform me of the days taken by your office in issuing/renewing passports in last 25 applications, excluding days required for police verification.
10. Please inform me of the number of complaints for delay in issuing/renewing passports that were received against your office in last one year or last financial year.

Signature of Applicant:

As can be seen from both the examples, the writer must begin by stating the purpose of drafting the letter.

I. She/He must state the kind of information required and the subject of the letter in simple and clear terms.

For example:

- i) To enquire about my Provident Fund Application.
- ii) RTI query about the Admission Procedure to 11 th Std.

II. This should be followed by specific questions / queries so that, when these queries are answered, a detailed picture emerges. There is no standard format in which these letters should be written. The applicant can follow the routine business letter format if s/he so desires. However, if s/he follows the 'small query' format s/he is likely to get precise and clear information. Besides, this is a simpler method of taking up a specific issue.

For example:

I would like to use the RTI Act to know about my provident fund application/ pension file/ submission of my application for Mhada flats.

1. What is the current status of my application/ file?
2. Who is the officer-in-charge who is handling this division/ these cases?
3. What is the serial number of my application?
4. What is the procedure followed?
5. Please tell me the total number of applications received by the concerned authority on _____
6. How many of these applications have been processed as on.....
7. What is the criterion for selection?
8. When will I be informed of my selection/rejection?

III. Appeals:

In case the applicant fails to receive information within a stipulated period, or he is not happy with the decision he has received, he can appeal to the higher authority. The appeal has to be filed within 30 days of the receipt of the first decision. The photocopy of the response received from the previous authority must be attached. If the applicant is not satisfied with the response, s/he can subsequently go for a second appeal, which has to be made within 90 days from the receipt of the judgment of the first appeal.

Tasks:

Draft RTI queries for the following situations:

- (a) You have been denied admission by a prestigious college despite a high percentage of marks in your previous/qualifying examination.
- (b) You had applied for an N.O.C. for a piece of land you purchased in Pune. You have made several trips to the Talati's office, but in vain.
- (c) Your application for an educational loan is not processed despite your having completed all the formalities.
- (d) You wish to know how the funds of the Students' Council/ Gymkhana/ N.S.S./ Ganapati festival/ Navaratri celebration are spent by the Council.

Learning objectives:

- To acquaint students with the place and purpose of the sales letter as a tool of direct marketing.
- To explain the AIDA model that the sales letter adopts.
- To enable students to draft interesting and attractive sales letters.

A. The Sales Letter:

I. Introduction:

In the current scenario of an increasingly competitive commercial world characterized by rising advertising and operations costs, the sales letter forms an important and strategic tool of direct marketing. This is because the sales letter scores with its distinct advantages over direct and door-to-door sales.

The first important factor to consider is the cost. Using sales letters is much, much cheaper, as the organisation does not incur the cost of hiring space and sales personnel. It saves on the maintenance charges of the former, and the training and salary of the latter. Even taking into account the cost of designing, printing and postage, the cost to the company for the sales letter is negligible as compared to other forms of sale. Secondly, the sales letter can have an extended reach and be dispatched far and wide. It is also more focused in its target and can be directed at only a particular segment of the potential customer whom the product or service may benefit. By virtue of being a personalised letter, it can appeal to customers who appreciate a personal touch. Moreover, the reading of a sales letter can secure the reader's attention without other competitive factors such as music, TV, or actual speech, as one can read the letter at one's convenience. Companies and other commercial establishments vie with one another to compile precious consumer data banks which help in the dispatch of the sales letter, as well as other forms of sales, such as tele-marketing.

A creatively well-designed and an attractively written sales letter could be a powerful tool. But drafting such a letter has its own challenges. Firstly, in this busy world with its frenetic, rushed pace, not many people have the time to go through a letter carefully. Secondly, if one is not interested in making a purchase, the best letter may be in vain. In fact, if statistics are to be believed, sales letters result in just a meagre one or two percent of readers actually making a purchase. However, when compared to the cost of other means, it is still far economical. Lastly, since it forms unsolicited communication, it may cause irritation and impatience. It can have the same effect as spam' or unsolicited e-mail or unasked-for sms text messages received on mobile phones. They are simply deleted without a look, or totally discarded as junk-mail'.

It is therefore imperative that a sales letter be crafted with great care. Some useful tips may be borne in mind:

- i) Use the you-attitude to make it personalized.
- ii) Make it attractive and eye-catching, both in appearance and text.
- iii) Try and evoke the curiosity of the reader to ensure that it gets read.

The above objectives can be achieved in various ways. The use of colours and graphics is an important tool that cannot be dismissed. The envelope itself often succeeds in grabbing the readers' attention. The announcements of discounts, offers of free gifts or surprise items can also prove effective.

As marketing and sales form one of the very pillars on which the success of the business depends, much research and study has been carried out on consumer behaviour, especially the art of persuasion that results in purchase. Persuasion means succeeding in causing people to do something that they would not otherwise have done. A sales pitch is aimed at targeting the potential buyer's perceived need by appealing to one or more of varied factors.

Several models have been drawn up to explain the behaviour of consumers, from the moment they notice a product to the point when they actually buy the product or service. However, the most popular of them all is the AIDA model, where A denotes Attention, I, Interest, D, Desire and A, Action.

The sales letter therefore has to first and foremost arrest the attention of the reader. Apart from the use of colour and images as mentioned earlier, the letter in the introductory paragraph could also use a quotation or statistical data or a popular proverb or even pose a rhetorical question.

For example:

- i. **For a self-help book:** An optimist sees an opportunity in every difficulty, a pessimist, a difficulty in every opportunity. Sir Winston Churchill.
- ii. **For a savings plan:** Do you know that 60% of people have no concrete plans in place for post-retirement financial needs?
- iii. **For a leak-proof cement filling:** A stitch in time saves nine.
- iv. **For a safety house-lock:** Would you neglect the safety of your house before you leave on vacation?

One of the popular ways to attract attention is also by using an unusual format, particularly the Hanging Indented' one (as shown in the example at the end).

- i) To evoke the interest of a reader, one could appeal to emotion, rationality or the fear factor. The appeal to emotion is the strongest

determinant. One may appeal to the emotion of love or fear. Thus, love and care of family may prompt a home-maker to buy a particular brand of healthy oil. The appeal to safety, again, may determine her choice of a water purifier. The factor of fear may be the motivating factor in selling insurance policies or a car with safety features like air-bags. Appeal to rationality will focus on the reasons why one may go in for a product. For example, the reasons why one should join a particular gym: the multiple benefits it will yield in terms of health, good physique, and confidence, all in a hygienic and pleasant ambience. To sum up, a sales letter succeeds if it makes an appeal to the buying motive of the customer.

- ii) **D** An effective sales letter will succeed in making the reader desire the product or service. This can be achieved by providing information about the benefits the product will give the buyer.

For example:

- i. This T-shirt is sure to make you stand out in a crowd!
- ii. This SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) will put all your financial worries at rest without pinching your pocket!
- iii. For a wrist watch: Be in tune with tomorrow. Be the envy of your company!

A Finally, it is imperative to ensure that the reader of the sales letter takes action at the right time. To propel the reader towards this step, companies may again make promotional offers, or offer discounts or free gifts, or tension-free delivery and service.

For example:

- i. Hop into the nearest dealer's and collect your free gift with an immediate purchase. Hurry! limited offer!
- ii. Post the reply paid card in the nearest post-box and await your surprise next week!

Example: 1

The Personality Development Centre

27, Coronet Plaza, Mumbai-400 030.
15 May, 2008.

Ms. Sanaa Talwar, 6, Palm Court,
Mumbai - 400 050. Dear Ms. Talwar,
Time once lost is lost forever!

Surely you are not just one of those youngsters who only flow with the tide? If you wish to make the most of the long post - school vacation and exciting college years ahead, you couldn't do better than join the Personality Plus Programme'.

This is an ideal three week course specially designed for fresh college entrants. It will help you develop confidence in speech, deportment and making presentations, thereby aiding you in making a mark in your college. This rich value-addition will not only make your college years a time to cherish, but also groom you for a corporate career.

Time and tide wait for no one. Ensure your participation in this prestigious Programme by early registration, as only a limited number of students with potential have been invited, and the seats will be filled on a first come, first served basis.

Please note that registrations will end on May 25, 2008.

Sincerely yours
(Ekta Rathi) Director

Example:2

SWASTHYA

The Complete Fitness Boutique 21, Pali Hill, Bandra Mumbai 400 050.
Ms. Nausheen Nayar, 42, Hill Road, Bandra, Mumbai-400 050.

January 3, 2009.

Dear Madam,

Health is Wealth' is a timeless adage. The modern Indian's health is under onslaught as never before, with the pressure of the growing economy, increased competition, air, water and food pollution, and a hectic lifestyle.

SWASTHYA' is now here to relieve you of all your health problems. From timely check-up reminders to pick-up and drop back service, fitness and nutritional experts working in tandem to advise on your specific needs, a 24 hr emergency service – all at a nominal cost for members. In addition you also get to avail of the library and recreational facilities, all in clean, hygienic, pleasant and world class ambience.

Do drop in at your convenience, for we know that seeing is believing. You may also wish to refer to some of our well-known members from your neighbourhood for your own satisfaction. Since the concessional membership scheme for the Golden Club' offered to the 50 plus' is for a limited period only, we urge you not to trade this opportunity for a lifetime of regret!

We await your call to fix an appointment for the walk-around and demo tour.

Yours truly,

B. Handouts or flyers, also otherwise known as pamphlets, leaflets, fliers, handbills or brochures, are an alternate way of reaching out to the public in a more cost effective manner. They refer to a single sheet of

paper, folded or plain, but not bound, that is attractively designed to draw the reader's attention to a product, an event, a cause or special meeting.

Generally an A4 or A5 size paper is used. DTP or Desk Top Publishing has made it very easy for even amateurs to use these. Although for ideal designing one could call for competence and excellence in terms of colour, design, graphics and layout, it is the verbal content that one needs to consider here. Apart from readability and legibility, one needs to also know the target audience so as to effectively communicate the content or the message. While readability refers to the ease with which the text and the graphics can be deciphered, legibility looks at the clarity, or the ability to convey the intended message.

Needless to say, the text should be brief and succinct. It is not necessary that there be complete sentences; even phrases or stand alone words would suffice.

Here is an example:

**The Indian Pizza Festival Romance the Unique Delectable Blend of
The Italian Pizza with
The Indian Toppings both in
Veg and Non-Veg ! at
The Mumbai Festival Only!!**

An Opportunity You Can't Afford to Miss!!!

Questions:

1. Explain the importance and role of the sales letter as a tool of direct marketing.
2. Write a note on the AIDA model.
3. Draft attractive sales letters for the following:
 - i. Liquid gel-flo pen.
 - ii. Back-Packers' hiking expeditions.
 - iii. Instameal': a fast-food delivery scheme.
 - iv. Clickflick' DVD film delivery scheme.
 - v. Mathemagic': Vedic Maths classes.

REPORT WRITING

Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Types of reports
- 6.3 What a Report Usually Contains
- 6.4 Questions

6.0 OBJECTIVE

To familiarize students with the basic techniques of drafting a business report, as well as other types of reports (investigative report, feasibility report).

6.1 INTRODUCTION

What is a business report?:

Report is a well organised representation of facts or a statement of a plan of action.

A report provides information either sets of facts or result of an investigation. Reports are important means to facilitate decision-making, solving a problem, sharing information. A report studies generally presents the desired outcome about the future course of action. In short, report studies a problem or a situation and offers a solution to the problem. Reports are important means of upward as well as horizontal communication. Reports may be short or long, oral or written, formal or informal.

Since a report is designed to give a complete picture of what is taking place at a distance or away from the person who receives it, it must be detailed and comprehensive – it must not leave out relevant information. A good report leaves no question unanswered in the mind of the person to whom it is addressed.

6.2 TYPES OF REPORTS

1. **Informational reports:** Informational Reports collect and present data for the reader. E.g. sales report, quarterly report, accident reports are investigative reports etc.
2. **Recommendations reports:** Recommendations reports recommend actions or suggest a solution. E.g. feasibility reports, problem solving reports.

3. **Analytical reports:** Analytical reports study and interpret data but do not offer suggestions or recommendations. E.g. annual reports, audit reports.

Here, we are more concerned with investigative report and feasibility report with formal written form.

Investigate report:

An investigate report is written as an outcome of an inquiry conducted either by an individual or a committee. An expert or experts who are impartial and neutral are authorised to investigate the cause, nature and impact of the problem and suggest ways and means of solving it as well as ensure that it does not recur in future. Accidents reports are examples of investigate reports. The reports submitted by various high powered commissions set up by the government to inquire into scams, corruption charges, air and rail accidents are examples of investigative reports.

Feasibility report:

A feasibility report is written prior to an event or project undertaken by an organisation. It is entrusted to an expert or experts, those who are in a position to make recommendations for or against the proposed activity. The report is prepared and tabled before the authorities who then deliberate and decide on the next course of action.

Reports may be written in the schematic or letter format. The longer formal report follow the schematic format where as the shorter informal report uses the letter format.

6.3 WHAT A REPORT USUALLY CONTAINS

Short reports which could be in the form of letters, have their contents (sometimes paragraphs) arranged in the following manner:

1. The Authority
2. Terms of Reference
3. Procedure
4. Findings and Conclusions
5. Recommendations, if any.

Detailed (longer) reports have the following arrangements:

1. A title page
2. Table of contents
3. A synopsis or summary
4. Introduction including authority and terms of reference

5. Procedure and investigation methods followed
6. Findings and conclusions
7. Recommendations
8. Acknowledgements and thanks to those who have helped.
9. Appendixes.

1. The authority:

The authority under which the report is being written is mentioned first. Thus an individual submitting a report must mention the person or resolution by which he has been authorised to write the report. Similarly sub-committee or committee reports mention the resolution of the board of directors by which they have formed themselves into committee.

2. Terms of reference:

This section clearly spells out what aspects are to be covered by the report writers by focusing their attention on the main issue. Thus the terms of reference of a committee might be to report on poor quality of work put in by the workers in the factory. This means that the committee will have to address itself to this problem and should not stray into the field of economics or finance or the disadvantages of location, etc.

3. Procedure:

Here the report writers mention the procedure they followed in obtaining their data or information. How and when they visited different places, whom they met, with whom they corresponded and the details of the questionnaires issued, if any.

4. Findings:

Based on the data, facts and information collected the report writers will draw definite conclusions which are called 'findings'. The findings are summarised statements of all the data collected.

5. Recommendations:

Based on the findings the report writers will give their recommendations or suggestions as to the best course of action to be followed. It is in this section that the real skill and intelligence of the report- writers is revealed.

The student should note that the five parts of the reports given above are by way of guidelines and not compulsory to all report writing. Thus a "cash-flow" report which only gives figures of amount of cash coming in or going out in a week or months will not contain "authority", "terms of reference" or "recommendations". Similarly a directors report will not contain "authority" or "terms of reference" though it may touch upon such other topics as the economy of the country or the political situation, etc.

If the report is likely to be long one, the writer should use headings or sub-titles to break up the text and to refocus the reader attention

An organisation may appoint an individual or committee to prepare a report and the format of report will be on that.

Reports written by individuals:

A report written by an individual may be sent in the form of a letter. If, however, the report is likely to be a long one with several sub-titles and sections then it should be written in the form of an impersonal statement with a covering letter.

Reports by individuals must be written in the first person singular and they are of great use to the report writer himself as they enable him to give expression to his talent and ability. Reports by secretaries and experts come in this category. The report must be signed by the individual writing it. Short reports, sent by individuals, tend to be personal in nature. They involve a personal relationship and concern a personal investigation.

Committee reports:

Reports written by committees or sub-committees are more impersonal in tone and formal in phraseology. They usually contain phrase like “the committee came to the conclusion” or “the committee was of the opinion” the report is signed by the chairmen on behalf of the committee or by the members of the committee themselves, if they are not too many. While drafting such reports care should be taken to see that if any member of the committee has dissented from the general opinion of the committee a NOTE OF DISSENT, containing that member’s views is attached to the report. As committees in the business world, which submit reports are not political bodies, no importance is attached to unanimity. Indeed a committee member who expresses dissent often gives the authorities a clearer picture.

Example of investigative report (committee):

Date:

The Managing Director,
Washing Machine Company,
Vikhroli (East),
Mumbai 400 024.

Subject- Report on the causes of decline in the sales of washing machine

Dear Sir,

This is in response to your letter asking me to find out the reasons for decline of the sales of the company’s washing machine. I am happy to inform you that I have probed into the matter and compiled this report for your perusal.

I interviewed 30 customers who had purchased washing machines in the month of December and also studied the complaint letters received from the customers.

The customers were found to be unhappy mainly for the following reasons:

1. The machine made a lot of noise
2. The outlet pipe became loose too often, spilling water all over
3. Not taking water through pipe
4. The steel body of the machine rusted in short period of time

In order to find out if these complaints were specific to machines produced under a specific batch, I looked at all the complaint letters received by the company and realised that was not the case. Complaints against machines purchased within last three months were similar in nature.

It seems that product design is defective and needs urgent rectification. Once the product design is improved, the company will have to focus on an advertising and publicity campaign to regain its lost image, as well as the trust of the customers.

Giving additional incentives to retailers can help promote the machine and improve sales.

With regards

Report of the committee on student's participation in co-curricular activities.

1. Authority and Terms of reference:

A committee was appointed following the resolution passed by the local managing committee in its meeting held on 20 Dec 2020 "resolved that a committee be and is hereby formed to look into the reasons behind lack of participation in various extra-curricular activities organized by the college. The committee would submit its report to the principal of the college by the 26th Jan 2021.

2. Procedure:

The committee met twice to formalize the procedure. A questionnaire was formulated to be administered to the students. The committee collected the exact number of students who participated in each of the various extra-curricular activities organised by the college during this year and previous year.

3. Findings:

After collecting data and comparing the figures obtained over two years, the committee arrived at the following conclusions:

- Students interest in these activities was decreasing
- Majority of the students had enrolled either for professional courses, or tuition classes, or had jobs.
- Participation in sport meant rigorous practice, for which they had no time.

4. Conclusion:

Students are not interested in extra-curricular activities. They have neither the time nor the inclination to participate in such activities.

5. Recommendations:

Considering that extra-curricular activities are necessary for overall personality development, the sub-committee recommended the following measures:

- Creating awareness among students about the importance of extra-curricular activities
- Projecting such activities as stress busters.

Place-

Date-

Signature
Chairman,
Secretaries,
Members.

Examples of investigative report (individual)-

25 March 2020

The Principal

_____ College Mumbai

Subject- Submission of Report on Students' Grievances

Dear Madam,

As the General Secretary of the Students' Council, I was asked, in the meeting held on 20 March 2020 to study complaints from the students and submit a report within 15 days, making suggestions to the Grievance Committee. I am glad to inform you that I have successfully completed the scrutiny of complaints and here is the report. There were 15 complaints in July and August, which were sorted and categorized as follows:

- (i) A majority of the complaints, fifteen in all, were about the functioning of the library. Since there were only two computers in the library, majority of the students could not avail themselves of the internet facility.
- (ii) The complaints were also about the space available in the library. According to the complainants, the reading room in the library could not accommodate more than 150 students at a time. More space was needed to accommodate larger number of students.
- (iii) Five complainants specifically said that the library staffs were unnecessarily hostile towards the students.
- (iv) Students were dissatisfied with the marks given to them in the subject of Economics.

Conclusion: Students were dissatisfied largely with the library services, functioning of the office and the examination committee. As a representative of students I would like to suggest the following:

1. Management should take note of the complaints and act on them.
2. College should make provision for more computers.
3. The office staff should be more efficient and student friendly.
4. Students who have serious grievances regarding examinations should be called personally, and an interactive session,

The chairman of the examination committee and the students should be organized to resolve the matter. I sincerely thank you for giving me this opportunity to look into the matters that concern students.

Yours faithfully,

Examples of feasibility report:

Report of the subcommittee on feasibility of a Smart Card service by BEST for regular commuters.

The Chairmen,
BEST committee
Dear Sir,

Sub- Report on improvement of BEST services.

In association with the instructions contained in resolution of the BEST committee, held on____, the signatories of the accompanying report studied and considered the feasibility of improvement of existing BEST facilities.

As the chairmen of the committee, I am pleased to submit this report and request you to place it before the managing committee for their consideration.

Yours faithfully,

(General Secretary)

1. Terms of Reference:

A committee comprising of the following members was formed in accordance with the resolution passed in the Annual General Meeting of BEST held on....., to look into the feasibility of introduction of smart cards for commuters availing themselves of BEST services. The subcommittee was asked to present its report by 28 February 200—

2. Procedure:

The subcommittee met on 3rd, 4th and 5th March and decided to adopt the following course of action: a. Get feedback from commuters b. Identify routes that would be covered under the scheme c. Decide on the modalities — amount to be charged, the schemes to be offered, outlets for the distribution of cards, and the details for application.

3. Findings:

- i. Most commuters welcomed the idea of having a smart card; it was perceived as a convenient alternative for daily payment.
- ii. The BEST employees like conductors and depot managers welcomed the move and showed willingness to adapt to this new way of transaction.
- iii. They felt that this move will help BEST to project an image as a commuter-friendly service.
- iv. Administration showed willingness to make smart cards available to commuters in a month's time.

4. Conclusion:

The committee concluded that the move to introduce smart cards would benefit both the public as well as the BEST services, and that such a scheme should be introduced without further delay.

5. Recommendations:

- i. Proper publicity of the scheme before its introduction.
- ii. Organizing proper training to depot-managers to be able to provide information to commuters.

Example - Report on improvement of college Canteen facilities

Flat 101 Sharad chs
Wadala east
Mumbai

The principal,
Anthony College.
Sion (East).

Dear Sir,

Sub- report on improvement of college canteen facilities

In association with the instructions contained in resolution of the college council committee, held on 5th march, the signatories of the accompanying report studied and considered the feasibility of improvement of existing canteen facilities offered in the college.

As the chairmen of the committee, I am pleased to submit this report and request you to place it before the managing committee for their consideration.

Yours faithfully,

(General Secretary)

I. Authority and terms of reference:

In accordance with the instructions contained in resolution of the college council committee was appointed to study and consider improving the canteen facilities offered in the college.

II. Resolution:

That a committee be formed to study and consider improving the canteen facilities offered in the college

That the committee would consist of following members-

- 1) _____,
- 2) _____,

III. Procedure:

The committee visited four well-established colleges of Mumbai to study the facilities provided by them. During the visit the Principals, General Secretaries and Health Inspector were also interviewed.

A meeting to the staff and the students council of our college was held where the matter were discussed in detail.

The members of the college council committee were met and their views noted.

A random survey was conducted of students from classes to get their views and suggestions on the topic.

IV. Findings:

The existing canteen offers limited food variety,

There is no permanent chef who can make different dishes,

At a time only 50 students can have food in the canteen,

V. Recommendations:

The committee is of the view that the time is right to improve the existing canteen facilities offered in the college-

- 1) Health fund to be granted by the college council committee should be used.
- 2) Canteen capacity should increase to 150 students minimum.
- 3) Need to hire a professional chef and some workers for maintenance of the canteen

Place: Wadala, Mumbai

Date: 23rd march 2020

Example – Report about the possibility of starting hobby courses in the institute.

New Delhi

Date _____

The director,
The institute for Secretarial Services
University of Delhi
Delhi

Dear Sir,

Sub- Report about the possibility of starting Hobby Courses in the institute

I have been assigned the task of submitting report about the possibility of starting “Hobby Courses” during summer vacations in the institute. Accordingly, I beg to submit my report on the subject.

The two Hobby Courses viz. Secretarial Practice and Tourism may easily be started at the institute for duration of 3 to 4 weeks during the summer holidays because of the following reasons:

- 1) That a large number of students in Delhi are available who may take up the aforesaid two courses. I have collected the data and it is expected that there would be no problem in giving admission to about 250 students for these courses. Four groups may easily be formed.

- 2) That the faculty members may also be available. The concerned lectures would be available for conducting these courses and they have also consented to take up classes during the summer vacation. Their consent, in writing, to this effect has been obtained and enclosed with.
- 3) That the details about the additional income from fees and the expenditure are given in the statement enclosed herewith. A perusal of the said statement would reveal that the institute will have an additional surplus of income over expenditure amounting to Rs.1000 from the summer vacation hobby courses.
- 4) That the matter has also been discussed with the principal of the institute and he has kindly given necessary permission for conducting the aforesaid courses.

In my opinion, there is every possibility of starting hobby courses during the summer vacation. Where, on the one hand, it will give a surplus net income to our Institute, on

The other hand, there will be the best utilisation of vacations from the students point of view.

Yours faithfully,
Sd/-

6.4 QUESTIONS

1. A committee has been formed to investigate the possibilities of starting a co-operative store in your college. Draft the report of the committee with favourable recommendations.
2. The principal has received several complaints about poor service in the college canteen. A committee has been formed to study and give suggestions to improve the situation. Draft the committee's report.
3. As the General Secretary of the Student's Council you have been asked by the principal to prepare a report on the performance of students at various inter-collegiate cultural events. Submit your report along with recommendations.
4. As the Secretary of the Gymkhana you have been asked by the Principal to draft a report on poor participation of students in sports events.
5. As the General Secretary of the Students Council you have been asked by the Principal to prepare a report on the recently conducted 'Personality Development' programme. Submit your report with recommendations.
6. As the secretary of the Gymkhana you have been asked by the Principal to prepare a report on the recently conducted 'Athletics Camp' in the college. Submit your report with recommendations.

SUMMARIZATION

Unit Structure

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Characteristics of a Good Summary:

7.3 Guidelines to write effective Summary

7.4 Usage of Summary

7.5 Steps to be followed in summary writing

7.6 Techniques for Summarization

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Suppose your teacher is teaching a very important lesson and gives you all related concepts. Will it be possible for you to note down each and every word that the teacher has said?

Or, when you read a story, you want to remember what you read. Will it be possible for you to remember each and every line of the story?

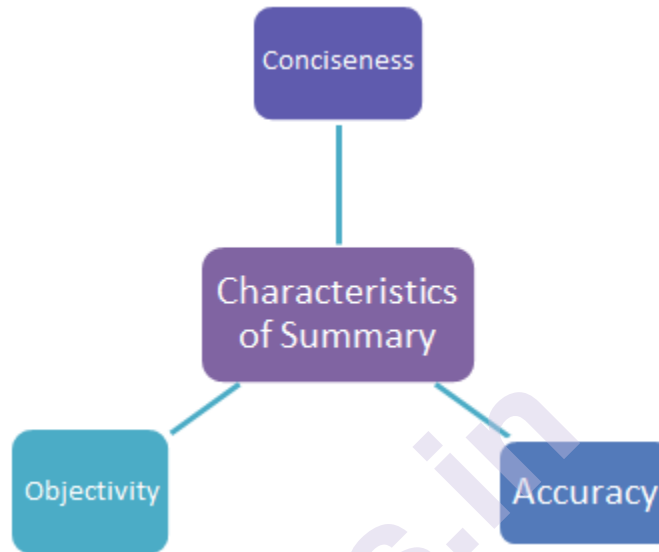
No, is definitely the answer. However, it is not always necessary to recall each and every word. Instead, you can make small notes for it and summarise those notes to have a brief central idea. A good reader always first finds the main ideas from the whole story. It is the great to remember that the main points are not always stated; sometimes, they are implied or suggested. After the discovery of main ideas, the next thing a reader does is the identification of supporting evidence for the main idea. This evidence can be explanations, details, descriptions, or statistics that expand the main idea. It is often suggested to use an outline or a graphic organizer to summarize information.

Summarization is an art that can be defined as collection of bulk information and creating a condensed version covering the important points. It is the technique of shortening long pieces of information so as to create a fluent and coherent summary that covers the main points outlined in the document. A summary is a written record of the information by a writer in his or her own words. It is the ideal way to outline the main points or the crux of the passage, conversation or note. It is a short version of long essays that contains brief collection of all the essential points. An important characteristic of summarization is the relevance, as a summary must contains all the relevant and important information from the passage or the notes. Summarizing is different from paraphrasing as it only condenses the wide information to provide the central idea to the reader. When someone summarizes any text, he/she is not merely rewriting it word to word using

synonyms and a thesaurus; rather he/she is reworking on the text to make its condensed form for later reference without losing its essence.

7.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SUMMARY:

One can follow these basic characteristics to write a good summary:



Conciseness/ Precision:

The very first characteristic of a good summary is conciseness or condensation of information into precise summary. The degree of density can vary: as one can summarize a three-hundred-page book into fifty words or one can also summarize a thirty-page article in few hundred words. Both are termed as summaries because both provide condensed form of material, although one condenses its material more than the other does. The length of the summary depends on a couple of factors and one's communication goals. For example, if one is writing a review for the book, some couple of words summarizes the book and completes the review process. The other arguable and a significant, element of summarization is the evaluation. The author's judgment about the book, i.e., author's views and evaluation along with reader's expectation in the process of summarization is important.

Accuracy:

Summaries are supposed to give accurate, precise and condensed version of the available material. An important characteristic of summarization is the relevance and accuracy as the summary must contain all the relevant and important information from the original passage or the notes. To do this, the writer must first read the material and understand it thoroughly. The summary must convey the writer's understanding and views so that the reader gets an accurate picture as well. The more simple and clear the writing is, the more it is easier to understand it. If it is less clear, the reader may misunderstand, so it is essential that summarization must be accurate. Before summarizing any information, one must be a reader first and

thoroughly read all the material as a reader. The writer's perspective may be misunderstood by the reader if it is not written clearly. Sometimes more than one reading is prescribed.

Objectivity: A summary should contain the viewpoint of original author, to maintain the objectivity of the article or text as the personal judgments of the readers may leads to biasness. While summarizing any article one must keep in his/her mind that he is supposed to make report, not to editorialize. It must contain the idea from the creator's perspective, not from readers own perspective.

7.3 GUIDELINES TO WRITE EFFECTIVE SUMMARY

An efficacious summary is one that skillfully condenses any paragraph into a smaller form and articulates significant information of the original text. Summarization acts as an effective tool in the hands of young researchers and writers as it helps them to review the articles/Journals swiftly that can save their time.

There are few steps one should abide by to write an effective summary:

1. **Keep a note of central idea:** Summary is used to express an account of the central idea or key points of a text. The first step in this process is to mark out central idea after reading and re-reading the summary. In general sense one must enquire about the authorship of the article, primary concerns presented in it, methodology the author chooses to convey his ideas and what circumstances compelled the author to write it. All the points mentioned above are essential to get the central idea of the text.
2. **Usage of own language/words:** The writer should try to use his own words as it will be beneficial for others to understand it in a better way. The writer should keep one thing in his/her mind that there should be moderate usage of quotations and if required phrases should be used originally. For example, one can use quote and phrases originally used by the author or also sentences he/she wants to use word-for-word in his paper.
3. **Conciseness:** Generally, a summary is written as one-fourth of its original text. Its length depends on the matter of the original text. Use few key words from the text and deduce the meaning of words and phrases. One should ignore the irrelevant matter of the paragraph.
4. **Keep objective approach in mind:** One should avoid documenting his/her own view points on the particular paragraph given for summarization. Summaries should highlight the writer's views and ideas than reporting one's (readers) opinion. The reader rather can make a note highlighting his own views and opinions after the evaluation of the article as this may be proven helpful.
5. **Proper record of information for future reference:** It is important for the writer to maintain proper record of information for future as it

will help the writer to cite his summary or summarized information while publishing any research article. Much of the summarized work will lead to no use if proper document of information is not maintained properly. In writing any summary or research paper the writer should give proper citation if the idea or views are not original and borrowed from someone other.

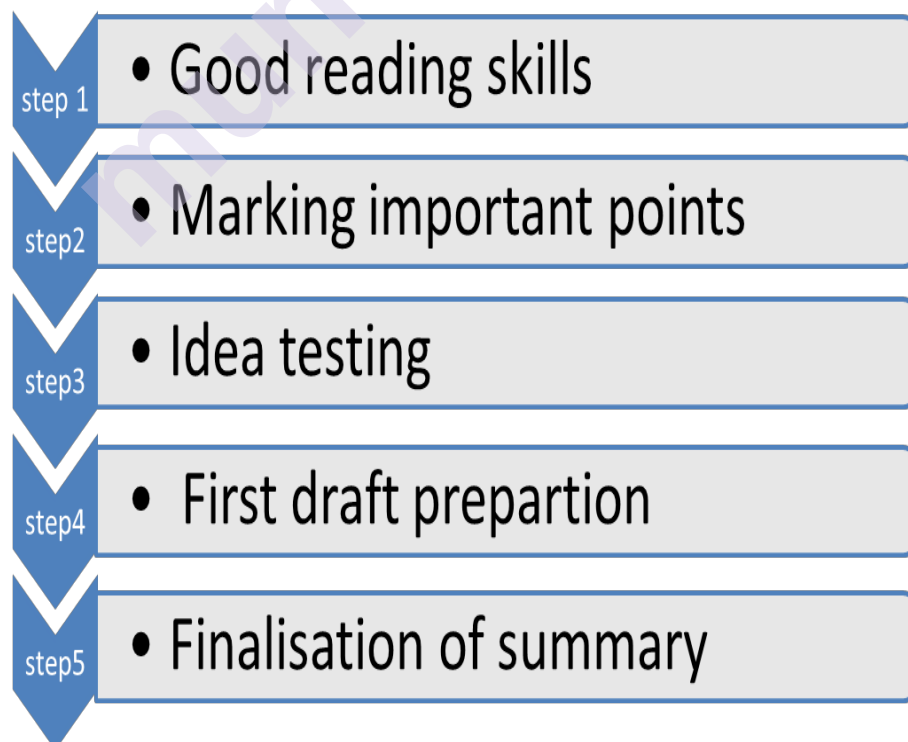
7.4 USAGE OF SUMMARY

- Summarization is a tool to improve the reading and writing skills and helps the writers to focus on the main concept.
- Summarization has its great importance in academic terms.
- Summary writing has a significant role in a professional area.

Good Summaries as Note Making Examples

- A good summary must maintain objectivity.
- It should only contain content relevant to the context.
- It must highlight the main idea of each of the paragraph.
- The best way to write a good summary is to use keywords from the original text but the writer should avoid usage of metaphors.

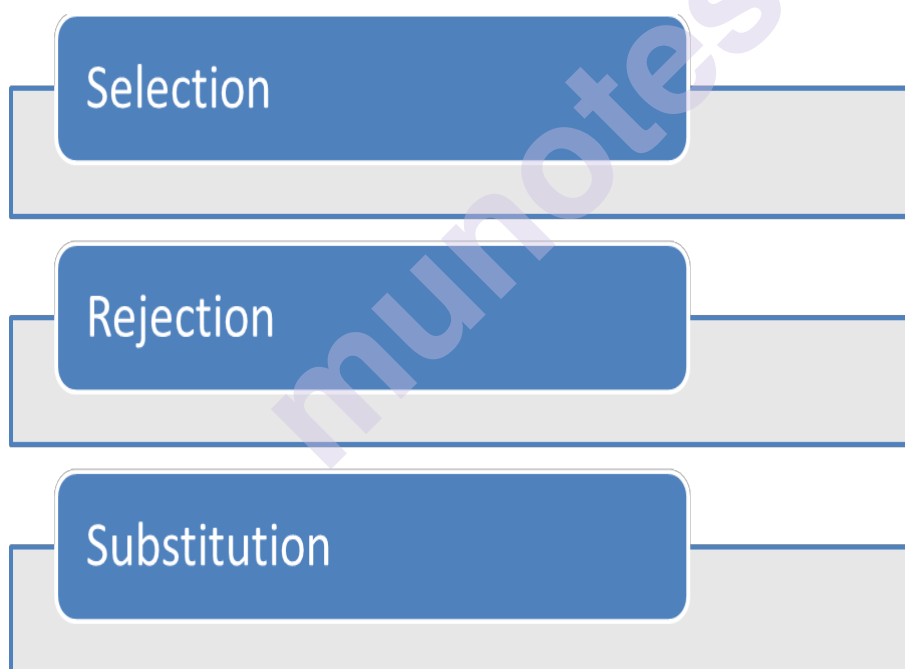
7.5 STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED IN SUMMARY WRITING



- The first step in the process of summarization is the requirement of good reading skills.
- After reading the whole passage the next step is to underline the important points from the passage.
- After the collection and marking of main points, the writer must carefully check the appropriateness of the idea to be used in the process of summarization.
- Preparation of first draft is very essential in the process of summarization. The techniques like selection, rejection and substitution can be used in this step where a writer can eliminate or add information to the draft.
- The final step is the finalization or precision where a summary is finalized keeping in mind the word limit and other requirements.

7.6 TECHNIQUES FOR SUMMARIZATION

The three main techniques mostly used in summarization are discussed as below:



Selection:

Selection of relevant information from the bulk is the basic skill required for summarization. For summarization, it is imperative to select the main idea, information keywords and important terms from the original text. It helps the writer in précisising the text and making short summary.

Rejection:

Rejection is the process of eliminating and carefully removing unwanted and un-important information from the original text while making summaries. It helps in reduction of the length of the summary.

Substitution:

Substitution is the process of adding some of the words and sentences in order to make a summary more useful and informative. In this process, many words are piled together to form a single sentence.

Important Points to be Considered while Summarizing:

Following are the important points to be kept in mind while making a summary:

- Careful selection of suitable theme for the summary.
- Always read the summary with the questions like who, when, what, where, how and why in your mind.
- Try to precise the information.
- Write clearly so as to avoid scope for confusion.
- Cover all the important points and main ideas.
- Avoid including unnecessary and repetitive sentences.
- Avoid making assumptions by your own.
- Try to restrict the content of the summary to 20-30% of the original text.
- Try to maintain originality of the source text.
- Avoid using metaphors, quotations and other figures of speech.
- Link each section logically.
- Use clear, short and understandable sentences.
- Cover all the relevant points.
- Give conclusion if there is requirement.
