

# COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

Lecture # 02

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# OVERVIEW

- Chapter # 02
- The Seven C's of Effective Communication
  - *Completeness*
  - *Conciseness*
  - *Consideration*
  - *Concreteness*
  - *Clarity*
  - *Courtesy*
  - *Correctness*



# INTRODUCTION

- To compose a written or oral message you must apply certain communication principles.
- These are called the seven C's of effective communication.

*1. Completeness*

*2. Conciseness*

*3. Consideration*

*4. Concreteness*

*5. Clarity*

*6. Courtesy*

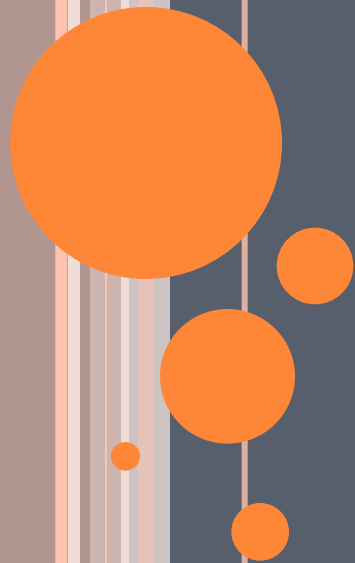
*7. Correctness*

- Apply to both written and oral communications.





# COMPLETENESS



# 1. COMPLETENESS

- Your message is complete when it contains all the facts, readers or listeners need for the reaction you desire.
- Communication senders need to assess their message from eyes of the receivers to be sure they have included all the relevant information.
- **Benefits of Completeness**
  - More likely to bring the desired results.
  - They do a better job at building goodwill.
  - Shows concern for others.
  - Help avert costly lawsuits.
  - Communication that seems inconsequential can become very important if information they contain is complete and effective.



# GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETENESS

- Keep the following guidelines in mind
  - *Provide all necessary information*
  - *Answer all questions asked*
  - *Give something extra, when desired*



## PROVIDE ALL NECESSARY INFORMATION

- Answer the five Ws that make the message clear.
  - Who
  - What
  - When
  - Where
  - Why
  - And any other essentials like 'How'.



- Example:

- To reserve a hotel banquet room:

- *"I want a room"*

*"I want to reserve a Meeting Room, at Pearl Continental Hotel, for 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 for conducting an official meeting with an international customer. You can send me confirmation through e-mail".*

*From:*

*Mr. M. Khan,*

*Event Organizer,*

*XYZ Corp.,*

*Rawalpindi.*



# ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS ASKED

- Answer all the questions while replying to some inquiry.
- Incomplete replies:
  - Result in unfavorable reactions
  - Show careless attitude
  - Show that some weak point is being concealed
- If you have no info state so.
- If you have some unfavorable info reply with tact and honesty
- If you need further information from the inquirer ask for it, shows positive attitude.
- Look for unnumbered questions



# GIVE SOMETHING EXTRA, WHEN DESIRED

- Use your good judgment in offering additional material if sender's message was incomplete.
- But the words 'when desirable' are essential.
- You must take great care not to waste the reader's time with superfluous information.
- **Example**
- You are the president of a Community welfare center, and receive the following message
- *I'm new to the city and would like to consider joining your welfare center. As I will be visiting the center within the next month, will you please tell me where the next meeting will be held ?*

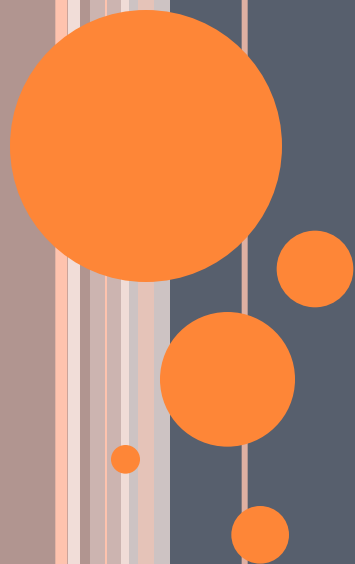


- If you answer only this question your letter would be incomplete.
- You should add information about a welcome message, information about parking space, date, day and time of meeting.
- Your message will then have *'something extra'* that the reader really needs and appreciates.





# CONCISENESS



## 2. CONCISENESS

- Conciseness is saying what you want to say in the fewest possible words without sacrificing the other C qualities.
- **Benefits of Conciseness**
  - A concise message saves time and expense for both the sender and the receiver.
  - It increases emphasis in the message.
  - It shows respect for the recipient, by not cluttering them unnecessary information.



# GUIDELINES FOR CONCISENESS

- To achieve conciseness, observe the following suggestions.
  - *Eliminate wordy expressions*
  - *Include only relevant material*
  - *Avoid unnecessary repetition*



# ELIMINATE WORDY EXPRESSIONS

- Use single-word substitutes instead of phrases whenever possible without changing meaning.
  - *Wordy : At this time*
  - *Concise : Now*
  - *Wordy : Due to the fact that*
  - *Concise : because*
- Omit trite, unnecessary expressions
  - *Wordy : Allow me to say, how helpful your response was.*
  - *Concise : Your last response was helpful.*
- Avoid overusing empty phrases.
  - *Wordy : There are four rules that should be observed.*
  - *Concise : Four rules must be observed.*



- Replace wordy conventional statements with concise ones.
  - **Wordy** : Please find attached the list you requested.
  - *Concise* : *The list you requested is attached.*
- Omit “which” and “that” clause wherever possible.
  - **Wordy** : She bought desks that are of the executive type.
  - *Concise* : *She bought executive type desks.*
- Eliminate unnecessary prepositional phrase.
  - **Wordy** : The issue of most relevance is teamwork.
  - *Concise* : *The most relevant issue is teamwork.*
- Limit your passive voice
  - **Wordy** : The total balance due will be found on Page 2 of this report.
  - *Concise* : *The balance due is on page 2 of this report.*



# INCLUDE ONLY RELEVANT MATERIAL

1. Stick to the purpose of the message.
2. Delete irrelevant words and rambling sentences.
3. Omit information obvious to the reader.
4. Avoid long introductions, unnecessary explanations, pompous words and gushy politeness.
5. Get to the important point tactfully and concisely.

## ○ Example

- **Wordy** : We hereby wish to let you know that our company is pleased with the confidence you have reposed in us.
- **Concise** : *We appreciate your confidence.*



# AVOID UNNECESSARY REPETITION

- Unnecessary repetition leads to dullness.
  - Use short names when you have mentioned the long one once. For **Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital**, use *Shaukat Khanum* or simply the *Hospital*.
  - Use initials instead of repeating long names. Instead of using **Pakistan International Airlines**, use *PIA*.
  - Cut out needless repetition of phrases or sentences. Sometimes it is possible to combine two or even three sentences using subordinate clauses or phrases.



## ○ Example

### Wordy:

Will you ship us some time, anytime during the month of October would be fine, or even November if you are rushed (November would suit us just as well, in fact a little bit better) 300 of the regular Dell Computers.

Thank you in advance for sending these along in parcel post, and not in express, as express is too expensive.

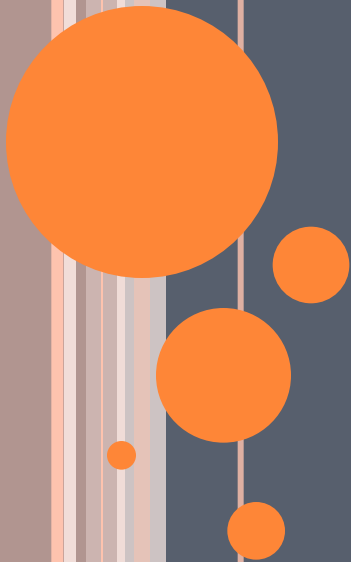
### ○ Concise:

*Please ship parcel post, before the end of November 300 Dell Computers.*





# CONSIDERATION



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- Consideration means preparing every message with the message receiver in mind.
  - *Don't loose your temper.*
  - *Don't accuse.*
  - *Don't charge them without facts*
- You are foremost aware of their desires, problems, circumstances, emotions and probable reaction to your thoughts.
- Handle the matter from their point of view.
- This thoughtful consideration is also called the 'you-attitude', the human touch or understanding human nature.



# GUIDELINES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Three specific ways to indicate consideration.
  - *Focus on 'you' instead of 'I' or 'we'.*
  - *Show audience benefit or interest in the receiver.*
  - *Emphasize positive, pleasant facts.*



# FOCUS ON 'YOU' INSTEAD OF 'I' OR 'WE'.

- Using 'you' does help project a you-attitude.
- Overuse can lead to negative reaction.
- To create considerate, audience-oriented messages, focus on how message receivers will benefit, what they will receive, and what they want or need to know.
- In some cases this can be accomplished by emphasis; you may downplay your own feelings to make a point



# EXAMPLE

- We-attitude : I am delighted to announce that we have extended our office hours to make shopping more convenient.
- You-attitude : *You will be able to shop evenings with the extended office hours.*
- We-attitude : We're are sure you must be frustrated by the length of time to ship your documents to Australia.
- You-attitude : *The documents you ordered will reach you within a week.*



- Negative situations:
- Showing consideration for the audience involves more than just using 'you' instead of 'I' or 'we'.
- Messages that use 'we' can be receiver oriented if 'we' includes receiver of the message.
- Sometimes avoiding you can reduce potential defensiveness or allow the recipient to save face.
- Avoid using 'You', if the sentences are insulting, sarcastic, tactless or untrue accusations.
- Employee passive voice for such situations



## ○ Example:

- Intensive : You failed to enclose your check in the envelop.
- Considerate : *The check was not enclosed.*[passive voice]
- Considerate : *The enveloped did not have a check in it.* [depersonalized]
  
- Intensive : Your contract tells you plainly that
- Considerate : *I am always happy to discuss the contract terms with new employees.* [receiver as part of a group]



# SHOW AUDIENCE BENEFIT OR INTEREST IN THE RECEIVER.

- Readers may react positively when benefits are shown to them.
- Whenever **possible** and **true**, show your receivers will benefit from whatever the message asks or announces.
- Benefits must meet recipient's needs, address their concerns, or offer them rewards.
- What you offer must be a benefits for receiver.
- You must identify legitimate benefits.
- Where actual direct benefit is impossible the message should at least show concern for the recipients.



- Merely inserting the word ‘you’ does not ensure the ‘you’ attitude, as shown in this sentence.
  - You will be glad to know that we now have a walkup window open 7-9 am and 3-5 pm every weekdays.
  - Some readers will wonder “So what !”
  - *You can now take care of your banking needs at our new walk-up window where a capable teller will serve you 7-9 am and 3-5 pm Monday through Friday.*



# EMPHASIZE POSITIVE, PLEASANT FACTS.

- Another way to show consideration is to emphasize pleasant and positive facts.
- This means stressing what can be done instead of what cannot be done.
- Also you must focus on words your recipient considers favorable.
- Among the positive words to which the readers react favorably are *benefit, cordial, happy, generous, loyal, pleasure, thanks, thoughtful* etc
- Among the negative words the reader might react unfavorably are *Blame, complaint, failed, fault, regret, reject, trouble, unfair.*



- Negative : It is impossible to open an account for you today.
- Positive : *As soon as your signature card reaches us we will gladly open an ...*
- Negative : We don't refund if the returned item is soiled and unsalable.
- Positive : *We refund when the returned item is clean and resalable.*
- Negative : When you travel on the company expense, you will not receive first class fare.
- Positive : *When you travel on company expense, your approved fair is not for tourist class.*





# CONCRETENESS

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- be specific, definite and vivid rather than vague and general.
- Misunderstanding of words has produced tragedies in war, peace, business and non-business situations.
- Often it means using denotative (direct, dictionary-based) rather than connotative words.
- Benefits of concreteness to business professionals are
  - Your receivers know exactly what is desired
  - When you supply specifics for the reader you increase the likelihood of that your message will be interpreted the way you intended.



# GUIDELINES FOR CONCRETENESS

- The following guidelines should be followed to compose concrete, convincing messages.
  - *Use specific and figures.*
  - *Put action to words*
  - *Use vivid image building words.*



## USE SPECIFIC AND FIGURES.

- It is desirable to be precise and concrete both in written and oral technical communications.
- **Example:**
  - Vague : **Students' GMAT scores are higher.**
  - Concrete : *In 1996 the GMAT scores averaged 600; by 1997 they had risen to 610.*
  
  - Vague: **She's a brain.**
  - Concrete: *Her grade point average in 1996 was 3.9 on a four point scale.*



- But there are some exceptions:
  1. When it not possible to be specific, **“you may not have precise facts and figures”**
  2. When you wish to be **diplomatic**:
    - **“you have missed three invitations to my office”** is harsh.
    - You may be more tactful by saying *“I’ve sent you several reminders to see me in my office”*
  3. When the exact **figures are unimportant**;  
*“more than half the committee was present”*



## PUT ACTION TO WORDS

- Make sentences alive and vigorous by:
  1. Use active rather than passive verbs.
  2. Put action in your verbs rather than in nouns and infinitives.
- **Use the active Voice:**
- In active voice subject performs the action.
- In passive voice subject receives the action
- Example:
  - The tests were administered by the professors.  
(Passive → Subject receives the Action)
  - The professors administered the tests  
(Active → Subject performs the Action)



- *Advantages of Using Active Voice:*

- Active verbs make the sentence more:

1. **Specific:** “*The Dean decided*” is more specific than “a decision has been made by the Dean”
2. **Personal:** “*You will note*” is both personal and specific than “It will be noted”
3. **Concise:** “*Figures show*” as compared to “it is shown by figures”
4. **Emphatic:** “*The students held a contest*” as compared to “a contest was held by the students”



- When not to use Active Voice:
- **Want to avoid personal blunt accusations:** *'The check was not included'* is better than *'you did not include the check'*.
- **Want to stress the object of the action:** *'you are invited'* is better than *'we invite you'*
- **Doer isn't important:** *'three announcements were made'* while *who made the announcements is not important.*



2.a. Put Actions in Verbs, Not in Nouns:

- *Professor will consider the report.*
- Professor will give consideration to the report.

2.b. Put Actions in Verbs, Not in Infinitives:

- *He keeps the records.*
- His duty is to keep the records



## USE VIVID IMAGE BUILDING WORDS.

- You can make your message forceful by using
  - **Comparisons:** *'This letter is three times as long as you said it would be'* is more vivid than **'This is a long letter'**.
  - **Sensory appeals:** **'The employee was tired after long days work'** shows less sensory appeal than *'the employees face was wrinkled after long days work'*.
  - **Figurative language:** *'She could be called the spark plug of the group.'* is more figurative than **'Her work in groups was exemplary.'**
  -



ANY QUESTIONS ?

