

What is Nonverbal Communication

Non-verbal communication occurs without using any oral or written word. Instead of written or oral words, it relies on various non-verbal cues like physical movements, tasks, colours, signs, symbols, signals charts, etc. to express feelings, attitudes or information. Although no word is used in non-verbal communication, it can effectively communicate many human feelings more accurately than verbal methods of communication.

Types of Nonverbal Communication

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Posture and body orientation
- Body Language
- Space and Distance
- Proximity
- Para-linguistic
- Humor
- Touch
- Silence
- Personal Appearance
- Symbol
- Visual Communication.

Eye contact:

Eye contact is an important channel of interpersonal communication. It helps to regulate the flow of communication. And it signals interest in others. Furthermore, Eye contact with audiences increases the speaker's credibility. Teachers who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility.

Facial expressions:

- The face is an important communicator. It is commonly said that the face is the index of the mind.
- It expresses the type of emotions or feelings such as joy, love, interest, sorrow, anger, annoyance, confusion, enthusiasm, fear, hatred surprise, and uncertainty.
- Facial expressions are indicated through the mouth (open, wide or closed), eyelids (raised or lowered), nose (wrinkled or relaxed), cheeks (drawn up or back) and the forehead (lowered or raised).
- Within the facial area, eyes are especially effective for indicating attention and interest. However, interpretations of facial expressions differ from culture to culture.

Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits:

- Happiness.
- Friendliness.
- Warmth.
- Liking.
- Affiliation.

Gestures:

- Head nods, a form of gestures, communicate positive reinforcement to students and indicate that you are listening.
- Gestures are movements of the arms, legs, hands, and head.

- Some authors opine that gesture is the deliberate body movement because they express specific and intentional meaning.
- For example; a wave of the hand has a specific meaning-“hello” or “good- bye”; a forefinger and a thumb touching to form a circle have the meaning - “ok”.
- In Europe, raising thumb is used to convey that someone has done something excellent while in Bangladesh the same gesture means something idiotic.

Posture and body orientation:

- We communicate numerous messages by the way we walk, talk, stand and sit.
- Standing erect, but not rigid, and leaning slightly forward communicates to students that you are approachable, receptive and friendly.
- Interpersonal closeness results when you and your students face each other.
- Speaking with your back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling should be avoided; it communicates disinterest to your class.

Body Language:

- Body movements can convey meanings and messages. Body language may take two forms of unconscious movements and consciously controlled movements.
- For example; When a person is bored, he may gaze around the room rather than look at the speaker or he may shift positions frequently.
- When a person is nervous, he may bite his nails or mash hair. These are usually made unconsciously. On the other hand, leaning forward toward the speaker to express interest is the case of conscious body movements.

Space and Distance:

- Space and distance are significant non-verbal tools in the case of organizational communication.
- A spacious and well-decorated room indicates a person’s position in the organization hierarchy and external people get a message about his importance and authority only by visiting his room.
- Distance is another communication tool, which expresses the degree of intimacy and individual acceptance.

Proximity:

- Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with students.

You should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading students’ space. Some of these are:

- Rocking
- Leg swinging
- Tapping
- Gaze aversion

Typically, in large college classes space invasion is not a problem. There is usually too much distance.

- To counteract this, move around the classroom to increase interaction with your students.
- Increasing proximity enables us to make better eye contact and increases the opportunities for students to speak.

Para-linguistic:

This facet of nonverbal communication includes such vocal elements as:

- Tone
- Pitch
- Rhythm

- Timbre
- Loudness
- Inflection

For effectiveness in communication, learn to vary these six elements of your voice.

One of the major criticisms is of instructors who speak in a monotone. Listeners perceive these instructors as boring and dull.

Humor:

- One should develop the ability to laugh at yourself and encourage students to do the same. It fosters a friendly environment that facilitates learning.
- Adequate knowledge of the subject matter is crucial to your success; however, it's not the only crucial element.
- Creating a climate that facilitates learning and retention demands good nonverbal and verbal skills.

Touch:

- Touch is a widely used form of non-verbal communication tool.
- By touching, one can express a wide range of emotions. However, the accepted modes of touch vary depending on the gender, age, relative status, intimacy and cultural background of the persons.
- For example, in the context of our culture, when one touches you from the back of the examination hall, your understanding is that he wants to know something.

Silence:

- Silence is a powerful tool for communication. It may have a positive or negative meaning.
- In a classroom, silence indicates that students are listening carefully and attentively. In the same way, through silence one can communicate his lack of interest or a failure to understand.

For example, silence often indicates that a person receiving instruction does not understand the action required or sometimes silence indicates consent.

Personal Appearance:

- Appearance is also an important non-verbal communication tool. Appearance includes dress, hair, jewellery, makeup, belt buckles and so on.
- Appearance indicates the degree of importance or interest a person conveys to an occasion. Through uniform, we can identify a student, a doctor, a lawyer, a police officer, etc.
- In an organization, one's dress is keenly observed to see whether it conforms to accepted standards of appearance. As an example, workers may wear different clothes when they are on strike than they do when they are working.

Symbol:

- A symbol is something that represents an idea, a physical entity or a process but is distinct from it. The purpose of a symbol is to communicate meaning.

For example, a red octagon may be a symbol for "stop".

On a map, a picture of a tent might represent a campsite. Numerals are symbols for numbers. Personal names are symbols representing individuals. A red rose symbolizes love and compassion.

Visual Communication:

- When communication occurs using any visual aids, it is known as visual communication.
- Thus, communication that occurs through facial expression, personal appearance, gesture, posture, printed picture, sign, signal, symbol, map, poster, slide, chart, diagram, graph, etc. is called visual communication.

For example, to indicate 'danger', we use red sign; to mean 'dangerous', we use a skull placed between two pieces of bone put in crosswise fashion; to indicate 'no smoking', we use an image showing a lighted cigarette with a cross mark on it.

Importance of Nonverbal Communication

Some important points expressing the importance, necessity, advantages or functions of non-verbal communication are discussed below:

Well Expression of the Speaker's Attitude:

Various non-verbal cues of the speaker like physical movements, facial expression, a way of expression, etc. play an important role in expressing the inner meaning of the messages in face-to-face conversation and interview.

For example, the facial expression of the speaker indicates his attitude, determination depth of knowledge, etc.

Providing Information Regarding the Sender of The Written Message:

The format, neatness, language and the appearance of the envelope used in a written message send a non-verbal message regarding the writer's tests, choice, level of education, etc.

Expressing the Attitude of the Listener and Receiver:

Sometimes the appearance of the listeners and receivers conveys their attitudes, feelings, and thoughts regarding the messages they have read or heard.

Gaining Knowledge about a Class of People:

Clothing, hairstyle, neatness, jewellery, cosmetics, and stature of people convey impressions regarding their occupation, age, nationality, social or economic level, job status, etc.

For example; students, policemen, nurses, etc. can easily be identified through their dresses.

Gaining Knowledge about the Status of a Person:

Non-verbal cues also help to determine the relative status of persons working in an organization. For example, room size, location, furnishings, decorations, lightings, etc. indicate the position of a person in the organization.

Communicating Common Message to All People:

In some cases, non-verbal cues can effectively express many true messages more accurately than those of any other method of communication.

For example; the use of red, yellow and green lights and the use of various signs in controlling vehicles on the roads.

Communicating with the Handicapped People:

Non- verbal cues of communication greatly help in communicating with the handicapped people.

For example; the language of communication with the deaf depends on the movements of the hands, fingers, and eyeballs.

Conveying Message to the Illiterate People:

Communication with illiterate people through written media is impossible. There may also be some situations that do not allow the use of oral media to communicate with them.

In such situations, non-verbal methods like pictures, colours, graphs, signs, and symbols are used as the media of communication.

For example; to indicate danger we use red sign and to mean dangerous we use a skull placed between two pieces of bone put in a crosswise fashion.

Quick Expression of Message:

Non-verbal cues like sign and symbol can also communicate some messages very quickly than written or oral media.

For example; when drivers of a running vehicle are to be communicated that the road ahead is narrow or there is a turn in the road ahead, we generally use signs or symbols rather than using any written or oral message.

Presenting Information Precisely:

Sometimes quantitative information on any issue may require a lengthy written message. But this quantitative information can be presented easily and precisely through tables, graphs, charts, etc.

Conclusion:

To improve your nonverbal skills, record your speaking on videotape. Then ask a colleague in communications to suggest refinements.

Non-verbal communication can take many forms depending on the situation, the ability of communicators, etc.

CULTURAL DIMENSION IN COMMUNICATION

Cultural Dimension in Communication:

Communication is not only about substance and style but the cultural dimension is also very important with respect to communication, which is often ignored.

Learning cross cultural communication helps to understand how people, from different cultural backgrounds communicate.

It also facilitates in communicating in an effective manner across various cultures.

Cross Cultural Communication Styles –

The manner in which people communicate varies a lot between different cultures and even in same culture.

1) Language usage:

1. Learn new words of other languages:

If a person is talking to someone who belongs to Germany, or French it would be helpful to learn some important German words to easily connect with that person.

2. Avoid abbreviations:

All abbreviations are not universally known. For example, the abbreviation 'IAS' is widely known in India as Indian Administrative Services but, it might not be understood by a person from another country.

3. Avoid complex words:

As a word may not have similar meaning across the globe. Example Biscuit even means a cookie in many places and the word cookie has various different meanings. Thus, it is better to avoid these words.

4. Avoid causal words:

Words like What's up, Howz you, Yup etc. are casual expressions and should be avoided.

5. Good conversation required:

Listen carefully and speaks slowly as the language may be same but pronunciation is different. So concentrate and keep up with the speed. Also, the following things to be remembered while communicating in written form:

6. Ensure grammatically correct writing:

Conversation in written form should be grammatically correct. The ideas need to be placed in sequence and clear in understanding.

7. E- Mails not preferred:

Writing emails is not preferred in some cultures and people from these countries who want to have a direct conversation either face to face or telephonically.

8. Double check:

Written conversations have strong proof and value. Therefore, it is important to check twice whatever is written i.e. a text, graphs or figures all must be appropriately done. Writing is not easy, especially when you are communicating to people from difference cultures. One needs to be careful and practice before communicating in written form.

2) Non verbal communication:

Non verbal communication has deep meaning when we interact with people across cultures. Certain non verbal expressions play important role during cross culture communication:

1. Eye contact:

It is vital to have proper eye contact in western culture, but, it may be offensive in oriental culture for eg: Japan. As in Japan if a woman avoids making an eye contact it is not that she is not interested in talking or lacking in confidence. It is just that she is polite and respecting the person. In India, we have both situations. Eye contact is important at the time of discussions or interviews, but, not considered good while conversing with elders.

2. Expressions:

Facial expressions plays important role while communicating cross culturally. Smile is important aspect in expressions while in some cultures people constantly maintain smile on their faces and in other cultures the smile occasionally or with reasons. 'Researchers determined Dutch people pay attention to the facial expression more that Japanese people do. On the other hand, Japanese people express emotion in the tone of voice, not in the face. They found that Japanese participants paid attention to the voice more that Dutch people did-even when they are instructed to judge the emotion by the faces and to ignore the voice'(Nauert, R. 2010).

3. Gestures:

Gestures are needed to be observed very carefully. Examples, forming a circle with figures denote a sign of okay which means all right in US. But, means nothing in France as it just has the additional meaning of zero or worthless.

4. Time:

Cultures will be divided according to the time.

- Monochronic It indicates respect for time. Focus on work. Focus on now. That means present.

Examples: Monochronic countries US, Great Britain, Germany.

- Polychronic Here time is less important. Focus on relationships. Focus on future.

Examples: Polychronic countries China, Africa, Egypt, and parts of Asia.

5. Attire:

The appropriate dress for all occasions should be considered while communicating cross culturally. As wearing white in some cultures shows that traditional and peaceful look but, in East Asia it is sign mourning.

In Mexico formal dressing is important. But, in New Zealand semi-formals do work. In India, Sarees considered as formal but in Europe Skirt is considered as formal.

Hence, to have a better cross cultural communication:

- One must read about the people and culture before making a deal with them.
- Talk to people and ask about their experiences who have already visited the different countries.
- Be a patient listener, observe and learn about how to speak and what to speak?
- Get cross culture communication tips from some expert.

STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES:

The important aspect of communicating across cultures is knowledge. It is significant for people to comprehend the problems of communicating cross cultural and to overcome them. As communication problems arise due to cultural differences so it is required for persons to be tolerant and merciful, rather than argumentative & hostile.

Giving another thought before responding is a good aspect, as carefulness surely pays rewards, therefore one must move slowly to make any conclusions. Active listening helps in understanding the message and communicating accurately. People who act as translators helps in communicating cross culturally, as they can understand not only the substance but also the manner of speaking. Though, sometimes mediators may make communication more difficult due to the disputes between nations, or due to more close feelings for the person of their region.

The important aspects of Cross Cultural Communication are:

1. Knowing another culture:

A direct experience on familiarity with other culture helps in communicating more effectively. One can be more familiar by other cultures through listening to radio stations, or by visiting religious institutions, which may be helpful ways.

2. Feeling Threatened:

The lack of knowledge and understanding towards other culture make people feel like a stranger and lonely. This creates threat in the mind of being alone.

3. Tendency to Overlook Similarities:

Whenever we interact with people of another culture we first notice the differences rather than similarities. Therefore, people draw the wrong conclusions. The important common identity is of humanity which is overlooked.

4. Variations within groups:

It is not only that people are different in different groups but we may also see the variations within the group. Every culture may have variety of people they may be extroverts, introverts, honest, dishonest, hardworking, lazy etc. Therefore, we must not dwell in our mind the negative assumptions of other culture. Each culture is a mix of variety of people following their particular customs and rituals. Raman and Singh (2006) quoted the example of software companies Apple & Microsoft, they said, "Both Apple & Microsoft operating systems allow you to accomplish work with a word processing system. The work is the same, but the language and the coding through which that basic work is accomplished are different. This is why cross cultural communication- we have to go back and examine aspects of our own 'operating systems' and understand the systems of others to be able to communicate between the two platforms."

5. Changing Cultures:

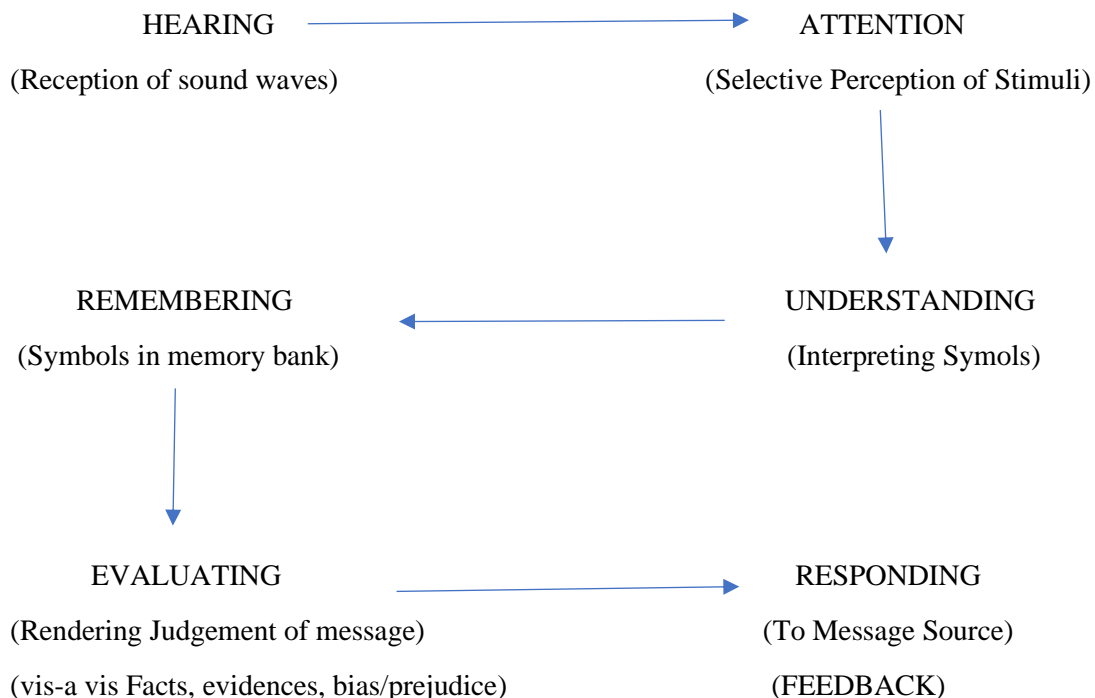
Cultures are not stagnant; they keep on changing through time to time. Cultures reinforce different styles of communication and interact through different customs and values. One should not stick over by feeling their own culture as superior as we should learn the best things from every culture. As it is written in Rig-Veda, "Let the noble thoughts come to us from all directions". Therefore, individuals who bridge the gap between cultures are the pioneers for making the world as a global family.

What Is Listening?

- Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process.
- Listening is key to all effective communication, without the ability to listen effectively messages are easily misunderstood.
- Listening is one of the most important skills you can have.
- An active process of getting information, ideas.
- “Listening is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken.

Process of Listening/Stages of Listening Process:

There are six stages of listening given as below:



1-Hearing/Receiving:

- Is the intentional focus on hearing a speaker's message.
- This stage is represented by the ear because it is the primary tool involved with this stage of the listening process.

It refers to the response caused by sound waves stimulating the sensory receptors of the ear. Therefore, the reception of sound waves, which we know as hearing, does not mean that there is any conscious perception of what is being heard.

2-Attention:

Our senses are constantly bombarded by countless stimuli from the world around us. However, your brain screens these stimuli and permits only a few to come into focus. This selective perception is known as attention.

3- Understanding:

- In the understanding stage, we attempt to learn the meaning of the message, which is not always easy.
- Deciding what the message means to you

4- Remembering:

- Remembering begins with listening; if you can't remember something that was said, you might not have been listening effectively.
- However, even when you are listening attentively, some messages are more difficult than others to understand and remember. Highly complex messages that are filled with detail call for highly developed listening skills.

5- Evaluating:

- The fourth stage in the listening process is evaluating.
- evaluations of the same message can vary widely from one listener to another.
- The stages two, three, and four are represented by the brain because it is the primary tool involved with these stages of the listening process.

6- Responding:

- Responding—sometimes referred to as feedback—is the fifth and final stage of the listening process.
- Your reaction to the message. It can be emotional and intellectual
- For example, you are giving positive feedback to your instructor if at the end of class you stay behind to finish a sentence in your notes or approach the instructor to ask for clarification. The opposite kind of feedback is given by students who gather their belongings and rush out the door as soon as class is over.
- This stage is represented by the lips because we often give feedback in the form of verbal feedback; however, you can just as easily respond nonverbally.

Types of listening:

Here are six types of listening, starting with basic discrimination of sounds and ending in deep communication.

Discriminative listening:

- Discriminative listening is the most basic type of listening, whereby the difference between difference sounds is identified. If you cannot hear differences, then you cannot make sense of the meaning that is expressed by such differences.
- We learn to discriminate between sounds within our own language early, and later are unable to discriminate between the phonemes of other languages. This is one reason why a person from one country finds it difficult to speak another language perfectly, as they are unable distinguish the subtle sounds that are required in that language.
- Likewise, a person who cannot hear the subtleties of emotional variation in another person's voice will be less likely to be able to discern the emotions the other person is experiencing.
- Listening is a visual as well as auditory act, as we communicate much through body language. We thus also need to be able to discriminate between muscle and skeletal movements that signify different meanings.

Comprehension listening:

- The next step beyond discriminating between different sound and sights is to of words at our fingertips and also all rules of grammar and syntax by which we can understand what others are saying.
- The same is true, of course, for the visual components of communication, and an understanding of body language helps us understand what the other person is really meaning.
- In communication, some words are more important and some less so, and comprehension often benefits from extraction of key facts and items from a long spiel.
- Comprehension listening is also known as content listening, informative listening and full listening.

Critical listening:

Critical listening is listening in order to evaluate and judge, forming opinion about what is being said. Judgment includes assessing strengths and weaknesses, agreement and approval.

This form of listening requires significant real-time cognitive effort as the listener analyses what is being said, relating it to existing knowledge and rules, whilst simultaneously listening to the ongoing words from the speaker.

Biased listening:

Biased listening happens when the person hears only what they want to hear, typically misinterpreting what the other person says based on the stereotypes and other biases that they have. Such biased listening is often very evaluative in nature.

Evaluative listening:

In evaluative listening, or critical listening, we make judgments about what the other person is saying. We seek to assess the truth of what is being said. We also judge what they say against our values, assessing them as good or bad, worthy or unworthy.

Evaluative listening is particularly pertinent when the other person is trying to persuade us, perhaps to change our behavior and maybe even to change our beliefs. Within this, we also discriminate between subtleties of language and comprehend the inner meaning of what is said. Typically also we weigh up the pros and cons of an argument, determining whether it makes sense logically as well as whether it is helpful to us.

Evaluative listening is also called critical, judgmental or interpretive listening.

Appreciative listening:

In appreciative listening, we seek certain information which will appreciate, for example that which helps meet our needs and goals. We use appreciative listening when we are listening to good music, poetry or maybe even the stirring words of a great leader.

Sympathetic listening:

In sympathetic listening we care about the other person and show this concern in the way we pay close attention and express our sorrow for their ills and happiness at their joys.

Empathetic listening:

When we listen empathetically, we go beyond sympathy to seek a truer understand how others are feeling. This requires excellent discrimination and close attention to the nuances of emotional signals. When we are being truly empathetic, we actually feel what they are feeling.

In order to get others to expose these deep parts of themselves to us, we also need to demonstrate our empathy in our demeanor towards them, asking sensitively and in a way that encourages self-disclosure.

Therapeutic listening:

In therapeutic listening, the listener has a purpose of not only empathizing with the speaker but also to use this deep connection in order to help the speaker understand, change or develop in some way.

This not only happens when you go to see a therapist but also in many social situations, where friends and family seek to both diagnose problems from listening and also to help the speaker cure themselves, perhaps by some cathartic process. This also happens in work situations, where managers, HR people, trainers and coaches seek to help employees learn and develop.

Dialogic listening:

The word 'dialogue' stems from the Greek words 'dia', meaning 'through' and 'logos' meaning 'words'. Thus dialogic listening mean learning through conversation and an engaged interchange of ideas and information in which we actively seek to learn more about the person and how they think.

Dialogic listening is sometimes known as 'relational listening'.

Relationship listening:

Sometimes the most important factor in listening is in order to develop or sustain a relationship. This is why lovers talk for hours and attend closely to what each other has to say when the same words from someone else would seem to be rather boring.

Relationship listening is also important in areas such as negotiation and sales, where it is helpful if the other person likes you and trusts you.

Barriers to Effective Listening

1. Physical barriers in communication:

Physical barriers can be anything that blocks the ability to hear what is being said. This can include noise, obstructions, and distance. External noise can be anything from a construction site next door to people talking loudly in the office or the sound of traffic outside of your window.

Physical obstructions can be people standing before you at a networking event or someone sitting between you and the person speaking at a meeting. In this case, your ability to listen effectively will also be hindered.

Distance can also be a barrier if you are not sitting close enough to the person speaking or if you have a poor connection when talking on the phone. The further away people are from one another when they talk, the more difficult it can be to hear them clearly.

2. Emotional barriers:

Emotional barriers are emotional factors that get in the way of effective listening. These include both positive and negative emotions, such as being excited, angry, upset, or distracted. It's difficult to focus on something else when emotions come in the way of concentration.

For example, if you're upset about something that happened earlier in the day, it will be challenging to focus on what the person in front of you is saying. If you're angry with someone, you're less likely to be very receptive to things they have to say. And if you're distracted by something exciting going on in your life, you won't be able to focus on the speaker very well.

3. Psychological barriers to effective listening:

Psychological barriers are similar to emotional barriers, but they are based on our thoughts rather than feelings. Sometimes, we tend to assume we know what the other person is going to say, think about what we're going to say next, or judge the person we're listening to.

For example, if you are talking to someone and start thinking about replying, you will be less effective at listening to what that person is saying. Instead, you'll be focused on formulating your response. This lack of focus can lead to misunderstandings and poor communication.

4. Cultural barriers:

Cultural barriers can be seen in both social and business contexts. These could be caused by differences in ethnicity, religion, traditions, or social status. Business cultural barriers arise when there is a difference in how business is done in different parts of the world. This can be because of different laws, customs, or social norms.

For example, in many parts of Europe, it is common to shake hands when greeting someone for the first time or even kiss on the cheek, but in certain places, it is not appropriate to touch a person of another gender that you have just met. This can lead to discomfort and misunderstanding if you are not aware of the cultural differences between you and the person you are talking to.

5. Language Barriers:

In our global society, a language barrier is probably one of the most common obstacles to effective listening. It can exist when there is a language difference between the two individuals talking or when one person has a poor understanding of the spoken language.

It is important to note that a language barrier does not have to be an issue of nationality or ethnicity. It could simply be a difference in dialect.

For example, someone from the south of England may not understand someone from the north of England because they speak with a different accent or even use other expressions.

6. Time Pressure:

This barrier is based on the idea that people feel they do not have enough time to listen. Time pressure can come from a number of different places, including from within oneself or from an external source.

For example, if you are running late for a meeting, you will probably be less inclined to spend time listening to everyone's ideas than if you had more time available.

Alternatively, if you feel impatient because the person speaking is taking too long, you might feel unable to focus on what they are saying. Because of this, it could be hard to focus on what the other person is saying, and you may stop listening and start preparing your excuse for leaving.

7. Pace of speech:

The speed of speech can often be a barrier to effective listening. When someone speaks too quickly, it can be difficult to keep up and understand everything they are saying.

In some cases, the person speaking fast might be doing so because they are nervous or do not think their listener is interested in what they have to say. Or, sometimes, they are just naturally a fast speaker.

If you feel overwhelmed by someone's fast speech, it can be hard to process what they're saying. This can lead to a lack of understanding and poor communication.

8. Tone of voice:

The tone of voice can also be a barrier to effective listening. When someone is speaking in a monotone voice, it's difficult to focus on their message. Or, if their tone is angry and loud, it can cause the listener to react emotionally instead of focusing on what the speaker has to say.

9. Interruptions:

Interruptions can come from either side of the conversation, and they can be physical or verbal. A physical interruption might be someone grabbing your arm to get your attention while you are talking or people trying to talk over each other.

Verbal interruptions come in the form of questions and statements. Overlaps happen when both people try to speak simultaneously, and neither will give up their turn to hear what the other has to say. As a result, the message gets lost, and the conversation becomes ineffective.

10. Information overload:

When there is too much information coming at someone, it can be challenging to focus on one thing. This often happens in business meetings when people are presenting either new or complex information. It can also occur during conversations when the person you are talking to gives you too much information at once. In either case, the listener will not focus on what is being said and will probably miss important details.

An example of information overload can be found in a business meeting. Imagine you are in a meeting where the speaker presents information that does not seem relevant to your job or tasks. This can cause you to become distracted and lose focus. As a result, you will miss important details that could affect your work performance.

11. Bias:

Bias includes prejudice or assumptions about others based only on their appearance, gender, race, religion, and other factors. When we are biased toward someone else, we expect them to act in a certain way based on our assumptions, resulting in poor listening. For instance, in a multicultural workplace, you often have a group of people who come from different backgrounds and have different physical characteristics or life experiences.

When you are in this situation, it may be easy for you to make assumptions about the people you are working with despite never actually getting to know them. This can prevent you from listening to them effectively because you are not giving them a chance to show you who they are.

These 11 barriers to effective listening can help us improve our communication skills and relationships at home and at work. By being aware of these obstacles, we can overcome them and improve our ability to listen effectively.

Tips for Effective Listening:

When done genuinely and appropriately, the following will increase communications and trust.

1. Keep eye contact. Look at the person talking. You'll have an easier time paying attention, and they'll be grateful for your focus.
2. Listen with your body. Nod and gesture with your hands to show you're keyed in to what the other person is saying. Make sure your posture and movements don't suggest you're bored or restless.
3. Practice patience. When someone is speaking to you, resist the urge to have something ready to say in return. Listen carefully to what they're saying before answering.
4. Empathize. Listening isn't just about the message. Intent and context are important, so try to make a habit of seeing things from their point of view. Try to really put your feet in the speaker's shoes. Avoid comments like, "I totally understand what you are going through."
5. Acknowledge. No one completely understands what someone else is going through. When we acknowledge that fact, our credibility as a listener goes way up.
6. Be present. Ask, "Am I present in this conversation?" Keep your focus on track.
7. Avoid answering the electronic interrupter. The phone, PDA, or email can be a useful means of communication. But if you are with someone, taking an interruption is one of the fastest ways to show you don't really care about him or her.
8. Hold one conversation at a time.

Etiquettes are the rules and conventions governing correct or polite behavior used in society, in a particular social or professional group setting. Business Etiquette is all about building relationships with people within and outside a business organization. In the business world, it is people that influence your success or failure. Etiquette, and in particular business etiquette, is simply a means of maximizing your business potential.

If you feel comfortable around someone and vice versa, better communication, and mutual trust will develop. This comfort zone is realized through presenting yourself effectively. Business etiquette helps you achieve this.

In Business Terms :

- Understanding overall business Decorum
- Treating others with respect and being courteous
- Being comfortable around people
- Presenting yourself in an acceptable manner

The Importance of Introduction:

- In today's business situations people must be able to properly introduce themselves and others without feeling apprehensive.
- Failing to introduce people in a business situation makes you look downright unprofessional.
- Always rise as a mark of respect.
- Look into the eyes and smile
- Give a firm handshake
- Say, " how do u do?"

What Is Business Etiquette?

Business etiquette refers to accepted rules for behaviour and communication in a professional environment. It affects relationships between co-workers, managers and clients, which can impact the health of an organisation and its culture. Having clear expectations of conduct can contribute to a professional, productive and respectful workplace for both employees and management. While businesses typically have their own rules for etiquette, some general professional rules persist in most work environments. Elements of business etiquette often include:

- Polite speech and mannerisms
- Professional body language
- Consistent punctuality
- Adherence to dress codes
- Clean, well-groomed appearance
- Interpersonal communication

Types Of Etiquette For Business:

You may practice etiquette differently depending on the situation and the environment.

Here are some common types of etiquette that may help you succeed professionally:

Networking etiquette:

The term networking refers to making connections within the community or your industry. These connections can be invaluable for job seekers, as they can help them communicate with potential employers. The people in your network can recommend resources you can use to excel in your role,

such as tools for creating sales leads or continuing education programmes in your field. Here are some ways you can maintain a professional network through etiquette:

- Consider how you can create mutually beneficial relationships with your contacts.
- Ask contacts about themselves, their professional backgrounds and their career goals.
- When meeting with a group of professionals, make sure you include everyone in the conversation.
- Follow up with people you meet by offering something that may be of value to them, like an interesting article or helpful resource.

Interview etiquette:

A comprehensive understanding of etiquette guidelines during an interview can help you make a positive impression on the hiring manager. Maintaining professional behaviour throughout the interview may be as important to the interviewer as your responses to their questions, so you might consider reviewing basic etiquette before you meet with them. Here are some ways you can show a hiring manager your professionalism in an interview:

- Arrive five to ten minutes before your interview.
- Wear clean, formal clothing and shoes and maintain a groomed appearance.
- Allow the interviewer to initiate the greeting and respond accordingly.
- Sit up straight and make eye contact when answering questions.
- Keep your mobile phone turned off and kept in a pocket, briefcase or purse.
- If asked about your current or previous managers or colleagues, speak positively about them.

Post-interview etiquette:

Following up with hiring managers after an interview is a polite way to differentiate yourself from other candidates, express your interest in the role and encourage the hiring manager to contact you again. You can practise post-interview etiquette by writing an email to the interviewer after you meet with them to highlight your continued interest in the role and your appreciation for the opportunity. Here are some ways you can make a positive impression in a follow-up email:

- Keep the email concise and professional.
- Thank the interviewer again for their time and consideration.
- Reiterate your interest in the role and share why you think you are a suitable candidate.
- Mention aspects of the interview you found notable.
- Share details about your professional background you forgot to include in the interview.

Introduction etiquette:

When meeting someone for the first time, it is polite to introduce yourself. Similarly, you can introduce professionals you know who have not yet met when conversing with them in a professional setting. Here are some ways you can use introduction etiquette to introduce yourself or others to a professional or group:

- Stand to greet the other person or group.
- Say hello, state your name and ask for their name.
- Introduce others with a statement like, "Please meet my colleague," followed by their name.
- Offer information about yourself or the person you are introducing to create interest and start a conversation.

Workplace etiquette:

Workplace etiquette includes the professional rules and standards you adhere to daily in your work environment. These include how you act in the workplace, communicate with colleagues, managers and

clients, consider others when performing your duties and present yourself. Here are some ways to incorporate workplace etiquette into your routine:

- Dress according to the company's dress code or standards.
- Arrive on time for your shift and meetings.
- Attempt to learn names as quickly as possible as a sign of respect.
- Return calls and emails within 24 hours or follow up with a timeline.
- Maintain a clean workspace that reflects the professional environment.
- Act courteously when using shared spaces.

How To Improve Your Etiquette:

Here are some steps you can take to improve your etiquette in the workplace:

1. Maintain professionalism:

Remaining professional at all times in work environments is key to practising business etiquette. Ensure your conversational tone suits the setting, which may be casual or formal. Use appropriate gestures as you speak, and express interest in what others say.

Show respect for others, their ideas and their opinions by including them in conversations, listening to their input and communicating politely and clearly.

2. Develop soft skills:

Soft skills can benefit you in any role because they show others how you interact with your colleagues, manage your work and organise your resources. These are essential to having business etiquette, which focuses on your professionalism. Here are some soft skills that can help you improve your etiquette:

➤ Communication

Improving your verbal and written communication skills can make a positive impact on your etiquette. When conversing with others, speak slowly and clearly so others can understand you. Use non-technical terms when speaking with those outside of your industry. Listen actively to others during conversations so they know you value their insight. When corresponding with a colleague, manager or client through written communication, remember to review the document for possible grammatical errors.

➤ Emotional intelligence

This skill refers to the ability to understand the emotions of others. To develop emotional intelligence skills, observe the actions and words of others to see how they react to different situations. Watch for nonverbal communication actions, such as a smile or raised eyebrows to determine how a person feels about an action or statement. You can use your observations to help you relate to others and engage in meaningful conversations.

➤ Time management

A significant element of etiquette is time management. Arriving on time shows others you prioritise company rules and have consideration for colleagues, who may rely on you to complete certain tasks. Time management also involves using your time in an organised manner so you can stay on schedule. To help you manage your time, consider creating a calendar that details your meeting information, project timelines and work schedule. You can find calendar apps that send you notifications for each event.

3. Engage with peers:

Business relationships are important to the success of professionals and the companies where they work. Professionals often rely on personal feelings about their peers and colleagues, such as how much they trust them, when deciding how closely to work with them. When you are meeting with other

professionals, consider engaging in respectful conversation with the other person so you can get to know them. This may help you establish a good rapport with them that can lead to a successful business relationship.

4. Ask for feedback: If you are unsure of how you present yourself to others, ask for constructive feedback from your colleagues or manager. Gathering an outside perspective of your workplace etiquette can help you realise actions you may not have noticed before. Try to incorporate their notes into your daily routine to improve your etiquette. If they offer you positive feedback, you can use these strengths to guide you