



COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN EMPLOYABILITY OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

Communication is the ability to communicate with others effectively. Communication skills play an important role in this competitive world and are one of the essential parts of almost any job. This paper highlights the importance of communication skills in employability and discusses various suggestions for improving communication skills for better employability. We know communication is among the most commonly listed employability skills for jobs and is in demand across most industries, disciplines and professions. Employers look for candidates with strong communication skills like strong written, verbal, and nonverbal communication skills. In professional life communication skills are the key to build relationships. The ability to communicate effectively is very important and enhance accordingly is also important in professional life. It helps us to get along with colleagues and understand the importance of interacting with others at workplace. The inability to communicate with others can lead to a lot of problems both personally and professionally. A person may have good knowledge on the academics, but having only subject knowledge is not sufficient for achieving job. In this competitive world a person's performance is evaluated mainly on the basis of the ability to communicate effectively. To be successful in professional life a person needs to adopt all the skills required and apply them in the respective field. Personality development of a person remains incomplete, if the communication skills are ignored. Many people fail to impress their employees/recruiters due to lack of communication skills even though they are strong in academics. Communication skills and Employability skills enable the learner to with stand the increasing levels of competition at every phase of life.

Keywords: Communication, employability, verbal and nonverbal communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive world, employers often look for skills that go beyond academic qualification known as Employability skills. Employability skills are often called as soft skills, they are the core skills needed for everyone to sustain in a job. These skills make a person desirable to an organization. Communication skills are an important part of these employability skills because it is an essential part of almost any job. Effective Communication Skills is the most important soft skill today, in the Academics as well as in the Job market. Communication has always been important in the workplace. A person with strong communication skills will be able to grab more employment opportunities compared to others who have same academic qualifications and skills. Employers always look for candidates with the right skills and qualities who can contribute to the organization's success **Adair, John(2003)**.

A person with strong 'hard skills' related to their academics may be able to manage the job role, but employers always incline to hire persons with effective communication skills. Communication skills are very hard to teach than other job specific skills. Job specific skills can be acquired through education and experience, but communication skills need to be practiced. They cannot be learned theoretically alone. These skills are individual, and reflect your personality at workplace. They are transferable skills that are useful in personal and professional life. The success of a

candidate in today's competitive world will increasingly depend upon skills, creativity and imagination. Employers always prefer people with an ability to adapt quickly to changes and new environments. Citing to the importance of communication skills for students, many universities have included communication skills labs in their academic curriculum. They cover almost all the four skills of English language namely LSRW.

'To be employed is to be at risk, to be employable is to be secure'

The Art of Building Windmills, Peter Hawkins (1999)

II. IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

In this competitive world most of the jobs need employees to possess strong verbal communication skills. Almost every job requires workers to use verbal communication skills in the workplace. Communication skills are highly ranked on the candidate evaluation checklists used by many job interviewers. Candidates who can express their ideas with clarity and effectiveness are given much importance by employers and have a high chance of excelling at their jobs. A person with strong communication skills has more chances of getting hired regardless of the job for which you're applying.

Verbal communication occurs in many different contexts including training sessions, presentations, group discussions, interviews, performance appraisals etc. The effectiveness of the person's verbal communication depends on the selection of words used, tone and pitch, clarity of speech, volume, speed, body language in the conversation. A person's verbal communication depends not only on the speaking ability of an individual but also on the listening skills. The effectiveness of communication depends upon how an individual listens to others. The verbal communication is applicable in both the formal and informal situations. Candidates with excellent verbal communication skills can excel in job recruitment process like qualifying in group discussions, interviews etc. Most of the students fail to impress the interview panel members during the recruitment process. Even though they are strong in academics, expressing themselves in front of the interviewers is very important. This can be achieved through practice.

Verbal communication is of 3 types, they are Effective speaking, Active listening and Writing skills. All three play an important role to survive in a job or to be employed. To be an effective speaker, the person should be an active listener. Many universities have included lab sessions for students on communication skills. The main aim of this is to make the students ready for the job market. Practice sessions in all the skills of LSRW are included in the syllabus. Students are given practice sessions, particularly on speaking skills so that they are perfect in that and are ready for the interviews.

EFFECTIVE SPEAKING SKILLS

Public speaking is a skill that can be mastered through practice and through some formal training. Effective speaking involves three major areas: what words we choose, how and in which situation we use those words, and how we bond it with nonverbal communication. Good speaking skills will help a person to interact with others and convince them in believing and accepting our opinions. A person with good speaking skills can effectively convey and receive messages in person as well as via phone, email and social media.



Excellent Speaking skills help us to utilize the opportunities in a better way, whether it is a seminar, interview, group discussion, presentation etc. In work environment giving seminars, presentations are regular activities. You can present the ideas and opinions in an impressive way if you have this skill. A person can excel in an interview with good speaking skills apart from subject knowledge. Speaking skills play a very important role during presentations. The following are some suggestions to be an effective speaker:

- Develop your speaking skills in order to strengthen your confidence level.
- Use language purposely so that the audience can adapt it easily.
- Always speak clearly, pleasantly, correctly and with proper emphasis on words.
- Visualize yourself being successful.
- Enjoy body language to the best advantage.
- Avoid nervousness.
- Make proper eye contact with the listener.
- Practice, practice and only practice.
- Always be confident and speak confidently.
- Speak at a moderate pace, not too fast or too slowly.
- Support statements with facts and evidence.

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

Communication cannot be complete unless a person is a good listener. To be able to speak you should be a good listener. Active listening is essential for verbal communication. Speaking skills are important, but you cannot respond to others unless you listen to them. Listening is a complex activity, where in a person needs to understand, analyze and respond appropriately in a given situation. Good listeners appreciate flow of new idea, information and share the same. Organizations always follow the principles of effective listening. They are always informed timely, with the changes and implementations. To improve communication skills, a person must learn to listen effectively. Effective listening gives you an advantage and makes you more impressive and boosts your performance. It helps build relationships, solve problems, ensure understanding, resolve conflicts, and improve accuracy. At workplace, an effective listener always commits fewer errors and no time waste.

To be a good communicator you should be a good listener and there are a number of ways that you can ensure that you listen more effectively. These include:

- Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message. Recognize that non-verbal communication also "speaks" loudly.
- Always be open mind and avoid making judgments about the speaker.
- Avoid being distracted by external factors.
- Use proper body language and gestures to show that you are engaged.
- Make sure that your posture is open for listening.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes etc.
- Smile and use other facial expressions.

- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors.
- Be open to listen and accept new ideas and information.
- Always provide feedback, if asked.
- Allow the speaker to finish before asking questions.

WRITING SKILLS

Writing skills are an important part of communication. Good writing skills allow you to communicate what you want to convey with clarity. Writing skills are also an essential part of communication. Nowadays communication starts from writing letters or email, which makes the first impression. Employers always prefer people with good written communication skills so that their company may be benefited by ensuring quality communications with everyone. At workplace we need to write Reports, letters, forward emails etc. So a person with strong written skills will always have a chance of rise in the career.

NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Nonverbal communication plays a major role in a person's life and it improves a person's ability to establish meaningful interactions with others in everyday life. A better understanding of this leads people to develop stronger relationships with others. **(Moore, Ninja-Jo 2010)** Nonverbal communication also called as body language is the act of conveying a thought, feeling, or idea through physical gestures, posture, and facial expressions, often done instinctively rather than consciously. Non-verbal communication is not a language wherein a fixed meaning can be interpreted. It is influenced and driven by the context in which it is used. This includes both the place and the people concerned in that situation, as well as the society. Non-verbal communication consists of a facial expressions, hand and eye movements, postures, and gestures which should be interpreted along with speech. In some situations, what comes out of our mouth and what we communicate through the body language may be two totally different things. If we are good at nonverbal communication, we can express what we really mean, connect better with others, and build stronger, more rewarding relationships.

Most of the time people need to give presentations both in student life as well as professional life and body language plays an important role for this. The basic purpose of any presentation is to communicate effectively. Without a positive body language we cannot survive in the professional life. Body language is important not only during normal conversations but also during formal discussions, interviews, group discussion, panel meeting etc. Proper body language not only conveys the right message but also attracts **Pease, Allan(1998)**.

There are many different types of non-verbal communication. They are:

- Gestures are the movement of head or limbs. We may wave, point, beckon, or use our hands when speaking excitedly, it conveys more than what we speak.
- Posture refers to the way we place the position of the body by itself and in relation to others like how you stand or sit, whether your arms are crossed, and so on.

- Body movements includes movement of the body like hand gestures, nodding or shaking the head, which are often the easiest element of non-verbal communication
- Eye contact is very important in communication. The way you look at someone can communicate many things like interest, affection, hostility, or attraction. It is important to be careful of how you use gestures to avoid misinterpretation.
- Tone is the rise or fall of pitch in the voice during communication. Care should be taken because it may communicate something other than the words being spoken.
- Facial expressions refer to the movement of several parts of the face in combination with what we feel. It includes smiling, frowning and blinking, which are very hard to control consciously.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR INTERVIEWS

The most basic and necessary skills in interviews are communication skills. When a person is ready for job, it is extremely important for a person to be good at communication. The way we present our self in front of the interviewer makes the first impression and identifies us as a potential employee. It is necessary for a person to be a good listener. We need to catch on to not just the words that the interviewer says; but also their intention and tone and respond appropriately. Concentrating on the body language, facial expressions and gestures also adds on greatly to the communication skills. We know, most of our communication is through our words, our body language and voice. Hence being aware of these two components is particularly important.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Effective communication is the heart of a successful Group discussion. We know that group discussion is a very important selection criterion during hiring process. Most companies conduct this to check the interactive skills of a person and how he can communicate with others. Group discussion is exchanging of ideas with the group members and to speak confidently and convincingly. Even though a person has strong subject knowledge in a group discussion, he cannot be successful without proper communication skills. The way a person communicates his ideas is very important. To be successful in group discussion a person should possess both verbal and non verbal skills.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR TEAM WORK

Teamwork skills are crucial to a person's success at workplace. Every organization looks for employees who can work in a team. Communication plays a vital role here. Unless a person is good at communication he cannot work as a team member, because teamwork involves continuous discussions with the team members where sharing of ideas take place. Working well with colleagues, managers and other people in your workplace can help you complete tasks efficiently. It creates an enjoyable environment both for you and others. Any organization that emphasizes good teamwork skills is typically a healthy, high-functioning workplace.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR PRESENTATIONS

Presentation skills are very important at workplace. In any area of work, most of the time a person needs to give presentations in various situations. A presentation is a means of communication that can be adapted in many situations such as talking to a group addressing a meeting or briefing a team. The message that you want to communicate in your presentation



will help boost your confidence. Good communication skills can help you to be a good presenter and increases your ability to achieve.

III. CONCLUSION

We know that Communication skills play a significant role in employability and are the key to building relationships. Communication is an art that can be learned and developed with practice. Most of the employers seek a person with strong communication skills, as they feel that organizations success depends upon the person's interactive skills and hard work. To be employable or to be employed, person should be good at communication, apart from having excellent technical skills. It is important to understand with whom, how, when and where we are communicating. So people need to concentrate on developing their communication skills for better employability and that comes with practice.

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