

Lecture 14

Communication

We've covered 3 C's in the previous Lecture. In this Lecture, we will proceed with the rest.

14.1 Concreteness

Concreteness literally means something real, particular or solid. This C, too, is an important part of 7 C's of communication. In the context of communication, concreteness requires us to be specific in giving information instead of being generic or general with reader or audience. Thus, concreteness is an aspect of communication that means being specific, definite, and vivid rather than vague and general. Communication is concrete if it uses specific facts and figures.

An impact (strong effect) must be created by the sender so that the receiver feels comfortable to provide a positive response. This C is connected with the C's of clarity, conciseness and consideration. This is because concreteness depends on facts and figures, which should come up with interpretation.

Since concreteness refers to the quality of being correct, it must be kept in mind that communication must be clear by providing factual information with grammatical precision, so that your audience don't ask you for any other information. We should avoid vague words, particularly with similar meanings. For example, "several" and "multiple" give us only part of information and are not to the point. Furthermore, both may be synonymous but there are situations in which the meanings differ.

Another aspect to consider regarding concreteness is the avoidance of avoid non-reliable sources. Always go for valid, reliable, authentic and credible sources for giving any type of information. We should use the right level of language keeping in mind the standards of languages.

To achieve concreteness, we may follow these four rules:

1) Use specific facts and figures:

Only the important information should be provided to the receiver. If extra information is included, then the receiver would lose the concentration and important information may be overlooked or ignored by the receiver. Relevant and important facts or information must be included so that the receiver gets the whole idea and no query remains unanswered. Answer of all the questions like "when, where, why, who, whom, what" should be included.

Active form of verbs should be used because:

- Fewer words cover the whole plan or idea in the better way.
- It is simple.

2) Put action in your verbs:

Sometimes, if verbs are not used in Active form, they take the shape of Noun. e.g., “She compiles the data.” Here, the verb “*compiles*” is in Active form but if we rewrite this sentence, then the verb transforms into a noun as follows: “Data compilation is done by her.” Here, “*compilation*” is a noun and the information becomes a bit complex.

Consider the following examples to hit this point home:

Action hiding in a “quiet” noun	Action in the verb
The function of this office is the collection of payments and the compilation of statements.	This office collect payments and compiles statements.
Professor H. will give consideration to the report.	Professor H. will consider the report.
The proposal has a requirement for Concept X	The proposal requires Concept X
Students held a meeting in the office	Students met in the office.

Action is hidden in passive form. Action must, preferably, not be hidden.

3) Choose vivid (brilliant), image-building words:

Use attractive words or terms, which can stay in the memory of the receiver. If some new idea or mode of expression is used, then automatically the receiver would focus on it and positive response would be generated.

Flawed Example	Better Example
The function of this office is the collection of payments and the compilation of statements.	“Hilltop Resort is the jewel of the western hills. Take a break from your work. Escape from life’s chaos and stress. Relax and rejuvenate yourself at Hilltop. Go back fresh and energized!”

Source: www.invensislearning.com/blog/7-rules-of-effective-communication-with-examples/

This example on the left is flawed because it is a vague ad message. It is made to sound like just another resort advertisement among a hundred others. The audience will never remember this ad message. There are no concrete details to take away from this message.

4) Be accurate

Check the **accuracy** (exactness) of figures, facts and words. This requires the information you provide to be correct and exact. As an example, consider the case that a single 0 can create problems: there is great difference between Rs. 100 and Rs. 1,000.

Secondly, grammar and punctuation are another important aspect. Place the commas, questions mark and other punctuation on their proper place.

Facts may change with time, so before writing about anything, verify that your fact still holds. For example, C++ used to be the most used programming language but now other programming

languages have taken the place. So, this fact that “C++ is the most used programming language” is not true now, even if this was valid for a period after its release.

Wrong placement of words can also cause problems. There are many words which are used at the place of each other because they have similar sounds or they have somehow similar meanings. But in Report writing, be careful while using the words; confirm the exact meaning of the word. Consider [this](#) example, “Most of the time, travelers worry about their luggage.” Now delete the comma after the fourth word to totally change the meaning of this sentence: “Most of the time travelers worry about their luggage”.

14.2. Consideration

Consideration generally means to show importance or respect or to show some care. For the purposes of communication, importance must be shown to the receiver and, in this regard, a popular rule of thumb is the “*you-attitude*”. In this approach, instead of using “I”, “you” is used to make the receiver feel important. This, however, should not be blindly adopted. In some cases, “I-attitude” may be preferred over the “You-attitude” as it can be harsh in such situations. For example, the sentence “*You have not paid the bill this month*” not only sounds impolite but may be a downright accusation. The consideration C requires that this sentence be paraphrased in line with the “I-attitude” as follows: “*I am waiting for the bill this month*”.

In general, it is better to use “I” when:

- You disagree with someone.
- You refer to the mistake of the receiver.
- You are irritated and want to hide that irritation or frustration.

With the help of the Consideration C, you may be able to attract the receiver towards your new project or business, show some benefits to the receiver so that the receiver understands his/her place or importance in that project or business and decides to provide you positive response.

To show consideration, give positive and friendly response to the receiver. In this regard, use polite language so that even a harsh message does not disappoint or hurt the receiver.

What can be done	What should be avoided
Show possibilities	Avoid discouragements
Introduce other options	Don't end up with the only option

The following examples illustrate these points:

Flawed Example	Better Example
<p>Dear Mr. Sadan I'm sorry that we are presently out of stock of black hand bags and will be unable to fill your order now. An order has been placed with the manufacturer in the color you want. We will receive shipment after ten days. I trust this delay will not inconvenience you. Sincerely, Mudassir</p>	<p>Dear Mr. Sadan Thank you for ordering a black hand bag. The color you chose proved to be very popular, and we quickly sold all we had in stock. However, we've placed a rush order for more and are promised delivery within ten days. Yours will be shipped the same day our new supply arrives. I know you'll be delighted with the unique carry-on bag Mr. Hassan.</p>

	It's not only very handsome, but incredibly inexpensive. Sincerely, Mudassir
You will be (or customers will be) able to do transactions after office hours, at the Teller counter till 5.00 PM.	We are happy to announce that transaction can be made even after 3.00 PM till 5.00 PM at the teller-counter.
It is not possible for us to extend locker facility to you since you do not have a fixed/term deposit in our bank.	Extending locker facility will be attended to as soon as we receive an investment in fixed/term deposit from you.

14.3. Courtesy

True courtesy involves being aware not only of the perspective of others, but also their feelings. Courtesy stems from a sincere you-attitude. It's not merely politeness with mechanical instructions of "please" and "thank you" although applying socially accepted manners is a form of courtesy. Rather, it is politeness that grows out of respect and concern for others.

In addition to following the guidelines discussed under "consideration", courteous communicators generate a special tone in their writing and speaking.

The following are suggestions for generating a courteous tone.

- Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful and appreciative.
- Use expressions that show respect.
- Choose nondiscriminatory expressions.

Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful and appreciative

Though few people are intentionally abrupt or blunt, these negative traits are a common cause of discourtesy. Sometimes, they stem from a mistaken idea of conciseness, sometimes from negative attitudes, sometimes from not knowing the culture of a country or even groups of people.

Inconsiderate, Blunt	Considerate
Stupid letter; I can't understand any of it. Clearly, you didn't read my latest fax. I rewrote the letter three times. Point	It's my understanding that... Sometimes, my wording may not be precise. Let me try again I'm sorry the point wasn't clear; here is another version.

Offensive	Considerate
Hey man, what's this I hear about the good news? You sure pulled a fast one this past weekend – and they didn't tell any of us about. Give my regards to the little lady, and wish her the best; she'll need it.	Warm congratulations on your wedding! Well, you certainly took us by surprise. In fact, just a few of us even suspected you were taking off to get married. But even though we didn't hear about it until later, we my wife and I wish you the best. Give our regards to your new partner.
Hi Ali,	Hi Ali,

I really do not appreciate how your IT team ignores the requests of my team, alone. My team is an important function in this organization, too, and we have our own IT requirement. Can you ensure that your team responds promptly to my team's requests hereon?

**Regards
Muzammil**

I understand that the IT team is swamped with work and gets requests from every department in the organization. My team, however, is working on a high-priority project and I would greatly appreciate if you could ask your team members to respond to my team's queries promptly and help us complete this project on time. Please do let me know if you need anything from me.

**Regards
Muzammil**

Note: Some examples are taken from Business Communication 7th Edition Herta A. Murphy, Jane P. Thomas and Herbert W. Hildebrandt