Unit- I

Fundamentals of Technical Communication

Technical Communication

According to Merriam Webster, communication is a process by which there is a meaningful exchange of information through exchange of thoughts, messages, speech, visuals, signals, or writing, between two or more living beings. This exchange can be through a common system of speech, symbols, signs,or behaviour! We cannot dispute the fact that we need to communicate. We need to communicate efficiently and effectively to function as civilized human beings.

"Communication is a process of sharing information with another person in such a way that he or she understands what you are saying." – Dr. H. Norman Writing

Communication is a tool with which we exercise our influence on others, bring out changes in our and others' attitudes, motivate the people around us and establish and maintain relationships with them. Communication makes a major part of our active life and is a social activity. This social activity is pursued verbally through speech, reading and writing or non-verbally through body language.

Technical communication is the process of conveying information through writing,speech,and other media. Information is usable if the intended auidence can perform an action or make a decision based on it.

Technical communication often work callaborativelyto create products for various media,technical manuals, white papers,specifications,process and procedure manuals,industrial videos,reference cards,datasheets, journalarticles,patents,training,business papers and technical reports.

Technicaldomains can be of any kind ,including the soft and hard sciences,high technology including computers and software,consumer electronics,and business processes and practices

Features of Technical Communications

Techinical Communication is different from general purpose communication in a sense that-
•Addresses particular set of readers
•Helps readers solve problems
•Reflects an orginations goal and culture
•Is produced collaboratively
•Uses design to increase readability and
•Consists of words or graphics or both
It may contain various different types of documentations such as
•User manuals
•Product descriptions
•Text for proposals
•Text for offers

- Test and measurement literature
- Sales documentation
- Training documents
- Some of Important features of the communication are
- Very well structured,using standered templets as far as possible
- Concise and simple to understand for readers
- Accurate-no scope for fiction
- Comprehensive-complete in it self
- Accessible and searchable easily through ToC,Heading, subheadings,indexes etc.

Distinction between General and Technical communication

General Communication

1. Contains a general message
2. Informal in style and approach
3. Indefinite pattern
4. Mostley oral mode of propagation
5. Not always for a specific audience
6. Less use of technical terms and graphics graphics etc

Technical Communication

1. Contains a technical message
2. Mostly formal in style and approach
3. follows a set pattern
4. Both oral and written way
5. Always for a specific audience
6. Frequently involves jargons

Language as a tool of Communication

It is an absolutely true language is a tool of communication. Though human beings can communicate without language,but non-verbal communication is very limited.The reality is language is the medium of communication.

Languages are nothing but the communication of one soul to another through written symbols and sounds.These symbols represent equivalent meanings that need to be interpreted by the lisenteners.Every human being has the ability to speak,write and understand languages (exceptions are always there),however not everyone has the gift of gab.

There are a myrid number of languages spoken and written in the entire world.However they are the channels of expression of same universal emotions,feelings,knowledge, and wisdom. Approximately there are 6500 languages that are spoken or written in the world.

In order to become a skilled user of any one language,one really has to practice very hard.These are basically two levels of skill in languages.One is the ordinary level,which we learn by default owing to the exposure to a language.The other is fluent level of language skills that can only be acquired by conscious training.It does not happen;one has to make it happen.

In order to be fluent user of a language one has to master one's basics in the grammar,Phonetics,spelling,Pronunciation, Structures,Tone,Intonation,Reading,writing,Listening skills of a particular language.

Dimensions of Communication

1. Key dimensions of communication-
- Sender- encodes and transmits
- Message- content
- Channel- medium used to transmit content
- Receiver or Audience- decode communication to derive meaning
- Effect- some measurable outcome of the process

2. Communication effect flows both ways from senders and receivers through various types of feedback and impact

Barriers to communicatation

Communication is a process beginning with a sender who encodes the message and passes it through some channel to the receiver who decodes the message. Communication is fruitful if and only if the messages sent by the sender is interpreted with the same meaning by the receiver. If any kind of disturbance blocks any step of communication, the message will be destroyed. Due to such disturbances, you face severe problems in being able to communicate effectively. Try to locate such barriers and take steps to get rid of them.

There are several barriers that affects the flow of communication. These barriers interrupt the flow of communication from the sender to the receiver, thus making communication ineffective. What are some of the barriers that you experience when you are speaking to someone and the understanding doesn't happen or what happens to you as the receiver, when you go off to do what you

- were asked to do and then find out you didn't do it correctly?:
- (a) **Use of jargon: Words mean different things to different people.**
- (b) Emotional barriers and taboos.
- (c) Lack of attention, interest, distractions, or irrelevance to the receiver.
- (d) Differences in perception and viewpoint.
- (e) Physical disabilities such as hearing problems or speech difficulties.
- (f) Physical barriers to non-verbal communication.
- (g) Language differences and the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents.
- (h) Expectations and prejudices which may lead to false assumptions or stereotyping. People often
- hear what they expect to hear rather than what is actually said and jump to incorrect conclusions.
- (i) We assume others know more/less than they do about the subject.

- **(j) Distractions get in the way: Both visual and auditory (daydreaming).**
- (k) Lack of feedback from the receiver.
- (l) Poor timing, the situation is not right for communicating about the subject.
- (m) Fatigue; too many other things on your mind lead to information overload.
- (n) Failure to consider the needs of the receiver.
- (o) Poor listening habits.
- (p) Prejudice; judgement disliking the person speaking, rejecting statements that are too radical,
- or different from your thinking; disagreeing with the message.
- (q) Different communication styles.
- (r) **Listening filters: Distractions; poor listening habits; jumping to conclusions before the**
- other person is done.
- (s) Deciding that there is nothing in it for you that is important.