

**THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
NATIONAL EXAMINATION COUNCIL OF TANZANIA
GRADE A TEACHERS' CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

624

COMMUNICATION SKILLS.

Time: 3 Hours.

ANSWER

Year: 2002

Instructions

1. This paper consists of sections **A, B** and **C**.
2. Answer **all** questions in sections A and B and **one (1)** question from section C.
3. Mobile phones and unauthorized materials are **not allowed** in the examination room.
4. Write your **Examination Number** on every page of your answer **booklet(s)**.

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1. Identify four possible effects on an organization when employees rely heavily on informal communication networks instead of official channels.

One possible effect is the spread of inaccurate or incomplete information, as informal communication is often based on personal interpretation rather than verified facts. This can lead to confusion and poor decision-making.

Another effect is the creation of cliques or exclusive groups, which may exclude some employees from important updates. This can foster mistrust and division within the organization.

A third effect is the weakening of formal authority, since employees may rely more on peer opinions than on official directives from management. This undermines the chain of command and can slow down policy implementation.

Lastly, excessive reliance on informal communication can lead to inconsistency in organizational practices, as different groups may act on different versions of the same information. This can affect overall efficiency and coordination.

2. Give four reasons why employees may resist adopting new communication technology, even when it is beneficial.

One reason is fear of change, as some employees may feel comfortable with existing tools and be reluctant to learn a new system. This fear is often rooted in uncertainty about whether they will be able to adapt quickly.

Another reason is lack of technical skills, which can cause anxiety or frustration. Employees who feel they lack competence may avoid using the technology altogether.

A third reason is the perception that the new technology will increase workload. For example, learning and adjusting to a new platform might initially require more time than using familiar tools.

Lastly, employees may resist due to distrust of management's motives, suspecting that the technology could be used for monitoring or surveillance rather than improving communication.

3. State four challenges a leader may face when giving constructive criticism to a high-performing team member.

One challenge is the risk of demotivating the employee. High performers may feel their efforts are unappreciated if criticism is not delivered tactfully.

Another challenge is overcoming the employee's possible defensiveness. High achievers may believe their track record makes them immune to criticism, leading to resistance.

A third challenge is maintaining the balance between acknowledging successes and pointing out areas for improvement, so that feedback remains fair and balanced.

Finally, a leader may struggle to ensure the feedback is specific and actionable, especially if the high performer's mistakes are rare or subtle.

4. Mention four ways in which cultural norms can influence meeting etiquette in multinational organizations.

In some cultures, punctuality is valued highly, and arriving late is seen as disrespectful, while in others, starting later than scheduled is common. This difference can affect meeting start times and attitudes toward lateness.

In some cultures, hierarchy plays a strong role, meaning junior members may not feel comfortable speaking unless invited by a senior person. This can influence participation levels in discussions.

Decision-making styles also differ, with some cultures favoring quick decisions and others preferring extended discussion and consensus-building. This affects meeting length and structure.

Additionally, communication styles can vary; some cultures encourage direct disagreement, while others prefer to express dissent indirectly to avoid confrontation. This can influence how debates and disagreements are handled.

5. List four consequences of failing to proofread and edit official documents before sending them to stakeholders.

One consequence is the risk of grammatical and spelling errors, which can make the organization appear unprofessional and careless.

Another consequence is the potential for miscommunication if errors change the intended meaning of the message. This can lead to wrong decisions or confusion.

A third consequence is damage to the organization's credibility, as stakeholders may question the competence and reliability of its communications.

Lastly, mistakes in figures, dates, or terms can result in legal or financial repercussions if stakeholders act on incorrect information.

6. Give four ways in which an overly centralized communication structure might slow down decision-making in a company.

One way is that information must pass through multiple levels of approval before action can be taken, causing delays.

Another way is that employees may hesitate to make decisions independently, waiting instead for instructions from top management.

A third way is that top leaders may become overloaded with minor issues, slowing their ability to address urgent matters.

Finally, a centralized system can discourage initiative, as employees might feel their input is undervalued, leading to slower responses to opportunities or problems.

7. Identify four ways that poorly managed virtual meetings can negatively affect team performance.

One way is that unclear agendas can lead to wasted time and off-topic discussions, reducing productivity.

Another way is technical issues such as poor audio or unstable internet connections, which disrupt the flow of communication.

A third way is lack of engagement, where participants multitask or lose focus, missing important points.

Lastly, absence of follow-up actions or meeting minutes can result in misunderstandings and incomplete tasks.

8. Mention four situations in which indirect communication could be more effective than direct communication.

One situation is when delivering negative feedback in a culture that values harmony, as indirectness can reduce embarrassment.

Another is when suggesting a new idea to a superior, where indirect language can show respect for authority and openness to discussion.

A third is during conflict resolution between sensitive parties, where indirect hints can avoid escalating tensions.

Finally, when discussing sensitive topics like salary negotiations, indirect communication can help maintain a positive tone while exploring options.

9. Give four reasons why using jargon in workplace communication can create misunderstandings.

One reason is that not all employees share the same technical background, so they may misinterpret specialized terms.

Another reason is that jargon can vary in meaning between departments, leading to confusion even within the same organization.

A third reason is that excessive jargon can alienate new employees or external partners, making them feel excluded.

Lastly, using jargon inappropriately can make messages unclear, causing delays in understanding and action.

10. A multinational company is introducing a new internal communication platform across all its branches. As the regional manager, explain four strategies you would use to ensure that employees from different cultural backgrounds adopt and use the platform effectively.

One strategy is to provide multilingual training resources so that employees can learn in a language they are comfortable with. This helps reduce misunderstandings and increases confidence in using the platform.

Another strategy is to use culturally relevant examples in training, ensuring that scenarios and case studies resonate with employees' local work experiences. This creates a sense of familiarity and makes the new tool feel more relevant.

A third strategy is to appoint cultural ambassadors from each branch who can bridge communication gaps and encourage peers to embrace the platform. These ambassadors can also collect feedback to improve the rollout.

Finally, it is important to schedule follow-up sessions to address challenges and demonstrate new features, ensuring that adoption is consistent and long-term rather than short-lived.

11. During a crisis, an organization's leadership is receiving conflicting reports from multiple departments. As the communication director, discuss four measures you would take to ensure accurate, reliable, and timely information is delivered to decision-makers.

One measure is to establish a single point of contact in each department who is responsible for verifying and sending updates. This reduces the risk of duplication and misinformation.

Another measure is to implement a standardized reporting format so that all updates follow the same structure, making it easier to compare and cross-check details.

A third measure is to use real-time communication tools, such as secure group chats or dedicated crisis management software, to ensure rapid exchange of verified information.

Finally, it is important to conduct quick fact-checking by cross-referencing multiple sources before presenting information to leadership, even if it means a slight delay, to maintain accuracy.

12. Imagine you are tasked with designing a communication training program for a team of engineers who are technically skilled but struggle with presenting ideas clearly to non-technical clients. Explain four components you would include in the program and their importance.

One component would be simplifying technical jargon into everyday language. This ensures that clients without technical backgrounds can understand the value of the solutions offered.

Another component would be storytelling techniques, showing engineers how to frame their solutions as narratives that connect with the client's needs and problems.

A third component would be active listening skills, teaching the team to pick up on client concerns and tailor responses accordingly.

Finally, I would include visual communication training, such as using diagrams, charts, and prototypes effectively to make complex ideas more accessible.

13. Read the following short passage and then answer the questions that follow:

"Although remote work offers flexibility and can improve work-life balance, it can also cause feelings of isolation and reduce opportunities for informal learning. Organizations must find ways to preserve collaboration and employee well-being in a virtual environment."

a) Identify two possible negative effects of remote work mentioned in the passage.

One possible negative effect is feelings of isolation, as employees may miss the social interaction that comes naturally in physical offices.

Another negative effect is reduced opportunities for informal learning, meaning employees may have fewer chances to pick up knowledge from spontaneous conversations or observing colleagues.

b) Suggest two ways an organization could address these challenges.

One way is to schedule regular virtual team-building activities, creating informal opportunities for employees to connect socially.

Another way is to set up virtual mentorship programs where junior employees can have structured learning sessions with experienced staff, mimicking the informal knowledge transfer of in-person work.

14. A government agency has been criticized for releasing contradictory public health messages during an outbreak. Explain four communication principles they should follow to rebuild public trust.

One principle is consistency, ensuring that all public messages align across different channels and spokespeople.

Another is transparency, openly acknowledging what is known, what is unknown, and what is being done to find out more.

A third principle is clarity, using simple and direct language so that the public can easily understand instructions without confusion.

Finally, the agency should demonstrate empathy, showing understanding of public fears and addressing concerns respectfully in all communications.

15. Choose one of the following topics and write a short composition (150–200 words) explaining your views:

- a) The role of effective communication in promoting teamwork.
- b) How social media has changed workplace communication.

I choose (a) The role of effective communication in promoting teamwork.

Effective communication is essential for building strong teamwork because it ensures that all members understand their roles, responsibilities, and shared goals. When communication is clear, team members can coordinate their efforts, avoiding duplication of work and misunderstandings.

It also fosters trust, as open sharing of information creates an environment where everyone feels included and valued. This trust makes it easier to resolve conflicts and give constructive feedback without damaging relationships.

Furthermore, effective communication promotes accountability. When expectations are communicated clearly, individuals can track progress and take responsibility for their contributions.

Finally, it enhances problem-solving by allowing diverse perspectives to be shared openly. This diversity of thought leads to innovative solutions and a stronger overall performance of the team.

