

**PGDM & PGDM-IBM, 2022-24**  
**Effective Managerial Communication**  
**Course code:DM-102 /INS-101**  
**Term– I, End-Term Examination: September 2022**

Time allowed: 2 Hours  
Max Marks: 40

Roll No: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instruction:** Students are required to write Roll No on every page of the question paper. All instructions on the reverse of the admit card should be followed meticulously.

Sections	No. of Questions to attempt	Marks	Total Marks
A	Minimum 4 questions with internal choices and all COs (Course Outcomes) covered in the question paper	4*5	20
B	Compulsory Case Study	2*10	20
			<b>40</b>

**SECTION A – (5 marks \* 4 questions) = 20 Marks**

**A1a. (CO1)** Robert and Howard had always gotten along well. They'd worked on several projects together and considered each other friends. So when Robert discovered that Howard held a strategy meeting and hadn't included him, he felt betrayed. He immediately shot off a text to Howard: "I can't believe you didn't include me in that meeting!" Howard was in the middle of a client meeting when his phone pinged with a new text. Stealing a look at his phone, he felt a jumble of things: concern, anger, embarrassment, frustration, defensiveness. The text distracted Howard, and his meeting didn't go as well as he had hoped. His anger grew as he thought about the fact that in a meeting earlier that week, Robert didn't support an idea Howard proposed to Jane, their CEO, even though before the meeting he'd said he liked the idea. So as soon as Howard stepped out of his client meeting, he shot off a curt, though seemingly unrelated, reply to Robert: "I can't believe you left me hanging in our meeting with Jane."

Two little texts — a sentence each — managed to upset a relationship that had been good for years. It took Robert and Howard weeks to be collegial again, and even then they felt the damage linger. It sounds simple, but in reality there is nothing simple about communicating, especially when emotions are involved. I — and you, I am sure — see this kind of clumsy communication all the time. At one point or other we've all been Howard and we've all been Robert.

**Q.** "Being a skillful communicator takes thoughtfulness. So much of our communication has become transactional — a word here, a sentence there — that we forget communication, at its essence, is relational". Explain. What framework of communication should Howard and Robert have followed to avoid this situation?

**OR**

**A1b. (CO1) How a Buddha on your desk could ward off an evil boss!**



People share many different things at work to try and brighten the drudgery of office life. They append moral quotes to an email signature line. They sit little statues of Buddha or other religious icons on their desk. They thumb-tack quotes from Martin Luther King Jr. or Winston Churchill to the drab, gray canvas of their cubicle wall. But those small efforts at workplace enlightenment don't just have an effect on the people who use them. New research shows they might also help pre-empt unethical behavior by their boss. A forthcoming study in the *Academy of Management Journal* found that when employees display moral symbols -- such as a virtuous quote in emails or religious images hung on a cubicle wall -- it could help prevent their managers from asking them to cheat or engage in other bad behavior.

"It causes others in their vicinity to behave slightly more ethical," said Sreedhari Desai, an assistant professor at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's business school, in an interview. "If the person happens to be your boss, they would be less likely to ask you to do something that's unethical." Sreedhari got an email from someone who'd heard about her research after having a bad experience with a rude client. He added a quote from philosopher Eric Hoffer about rudeness being "a weak man's imitation of strength" to the bottom of his email signature line. He ended up getting an apology from the client. "It's non-confrontational," Desai said. "It's a subtle, sneaky way to influence people."

**Q.** Discuss the significance of artifacts and the role they play in communicating nonverbally with the world.

**A2a. (CO2)** General Mills was ready to succeed in Japan in the 1960s. Their line of pre-packaged cake mixes was a huge hit in the US, where customers valued the convenience of needing just water, eggs, and the mix to produce a cake. Surely, that convenience would be appreciated by busy Japanese customers. Cake might not be as ingrained into Japanese culture as in the US, but there still seemed to be a strong market opportunity. What could go wrong?

The product launch was a complete failure, and it had nothing to do with whether Japanese consumers liked cake or not. The reason for the failure was glaringly obvious after the fact: just 3 percent of Japanese homes at the time had an oven. Realizing their market research problem, General Mills repurposed the cake mix to work in the much more common rice cookers. That never really caught on, so General Mills withdrew their cake mixes from the market.

**Q.** What are the lessons learnt about cross-cultural communication from the General Mills debacle?

**OR**

**A2b. (CO2)** The whole United Nations system is supposed to be organised with the same rules and manuals around the world. Mr. Alex came from a Caribbean English background and worked in Kenya headquarters of the UN. He was appointed to accomplish a mission in Mexico City for a smaller branch office in the Latin American region without knowing a single word of Spanish and was pulled from his English way of living and thinking, and driven to a Latin American environment which was completely unknown to him. It was very difficult for him to understand and adapt to the local culture; with the most critical aspect being the easy-going Latin personality and the concept of time. His responsibility was mainly to develop, implement and finance environmental projects for Latin American and Caribbean countries. But, frequently his work was blocked by a very bureaucratic administration. He expected faster inputs from his colleagues on certain shared issues, but the employees at the Latin American office were slow and laid back when it came to feedback or giving inputs. It was challenging for him to assimilate his sudden change of office, especially when he wanted to keep and uphold the same rules as his prior management. He kept on comparing the two cultures. It seemed like he did not want to be exposed to a new culture and was afraid of their “foreignness.” This behaviour created a hostile and uncomfortable environment for everybody at the branch.

**Q.** According to you, what is the reason for this cross cultural crisis? Explain with reference to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions.

**Q.** In order to successfully interact with a foreign culture or multicultural staff in the business world, what are the strategies you would suggest to Mr. Alex to avoid such a situation?

**A3a (CO3)** Failure to listen often stems from the belief that it ‘takes too much time or effort’ or that it’s ‘not worth listening.’ In essence, the manager *mistakenly* believes that their efforts would be wasted if they took the time to listen to what their team has to say. Sometimes, managers fail to understand what effective listening really is and don’t give sufficient focus to the importance of it. Take “Harry the Hard of Hearing”. He’s not *really* hearing impaired, nor is he *incapable* of listening. He’s basically made listening a low priority. This may be happening because:

- of the time pressure he feels he’s under
- he gets frustrated when the team doesn’t do what he has asked of them
- of the way in which he communicates
- of the way he comes across to his team

Whatever the reason, when managers stop listening, teams begin to collapse and the problem is amplified as they begin to disengage from the manager and the organization. The manager’s feelings about the limited value of listening are then affirmed by the fact that the team no longer wants to communicate... and so the cycle continues.

**Q.** Explain why effective listening is a fundamental management skill which must be developed and practiced daily. What are some of the strategies to improve this valuable skill?

**OR**

**A3b. (CO3)** Mr. Ramakrishna, the boss, is talking to Bimal, the subordinate, about a new program that the firm is planning to launch. Bimal is a poor listener. In this instance, he tries to listen well, but he has difficulty concentrating on what Ramakrishna has to say.

Ramakrishna starts talking and Bimal launches into the listening process, grasping every word and phrase that comes into his ears. But right away Bimal finds that, because of Ramakrishna's slow rate of speech, he has time to think of things other than the spoken line of thought. Subconsciously, Bimal decides to sandwich a few thoughts of his own into the aural ones that are arriving so slowly. So Bimal quickly dashes out onto a mental sidetrack and thinks something like this: "Oh, yes, before I leave I want to tell him about the big success of the meeting I called yesterday." Then Bimal comes back to Ramakrishna's spoken line of thought and listens for a few more words.

There is plenty of time for Bimal to do just what he has done, dash away from what he hears and then return quickly, and he continues taking sidetracks to his own private thoughts. Indeed, he can hardly avoid doing this because over the years the process has become a strong aural habit of his. But, sooner or later, on one of the mental sidetracks, Bimal is almost sure to stay away too long. When he returns, Ramakrishna is moving along ahead of him. At this point it becomes harder for Bimal to understand him, simply because Bimal has missed part of the oral message. Slowly he misses more and more of what Ramakrishna has to say. When Ramakrishna is through talking, it is safe to say that Bimal will have received and understood less than half of what was spoken to him.

**Q.** Which barriers to listening can you identify in the given scenario? Discuss how such barriers can be avoided in professional communication to become an effective listener.

**A4a. (CILO 4)** Study the image carefully and identify the application of Robert Cialdini's Six Principles of Persuasion.



Car insurance in India is not only mandatory by law, it is also quite essential for your safety and your peace of mind while driving on the road. Whether you purchase your car insurance online or through an agent, these covers are must-haves in your policy



OR

**A4b (CO 4)** A well-known media organization has created a controversial campaign which highlights the inadequacies in the product your organization offers for one of their clients, who is your longstanding competitor. You are aware that their claims are not entirely true despite which the target audience may get influenced by the bold statements and visuals in their campaign, causing your brand image to be tarnished and consequent business loss. There is a stir within the organization as well and your employees as well as customers are waiting to hear from you. Your organization has always demonstrated strong values in the past. You are responsible for corporate communications. You have to give a presentation to the Media whereby you can clarify and persuade your customers to retain their patronage. How will you go about planning this presentation critical to your company.

## **SECTION B – CASE STUDY (20 Marks) (CO1)**

### **Making Waves at Work**

Jessie Rosario is a 28-year-old professional living in Mangalore. She earned a degree in marketing from Manipal University in 2018. Two years ago, Jessie started working for a fishing boat repairs company called Open Seas Limited. The company is small, having only started operations in 2016. Jessie was originally hired to be the marketing liaison for the company with its customers, but she had steadily been handling more and more of the logistics issues with suppliers as well. As Open Seas grew, both aspects of her job began to demand more of her time, and Jessie began to struggle with handling both tasks concurrently. Current Situation Jessie's manager, Unni Krishnan, suggested hiring someone to handle logistics exclusively. "Besides," he said, "you're doing such a great job with marketing; I don't want our customers to feel like you're too busy for them."

Jessie thought this would be great for her. A new colleague would mean she would have more time to focus on the marketing aspect of the firm. Since business was steadily increasing, Jessie took it as a positive sign that the company was hiring. After a few interviews, Unni decided to hire Ananya Sharma, a 45-year old with some experience in the industry, to be the new logistics manager. She was older than Jessie and the other millennials currently working at Open Seas, but Unni felt her experience could come in handy with some of the more seasoned customers. Jessie was excited about meeting her new colleague. "Maybe she can be my mentor," Jessie mused about the valuable experience Ananya could share with the relatively young team.

Prior to Ananya's hiring, the group dynamics were excellent at Open Seas. The daily camaraderie was probably Jessie's favorite thing about her job, other than the complimentary pastries every Friday courtesy of the company. In fact, since the office was located in a commercial building, everyone at the company worked closely together, spoke regularly, and ate lunch together most days. Jessie considered her colleagues as friends. They even occasionally all went out for picnics or movies.

The Problem once Ananya started, however, there was a noticeable shift in the atmosphere at Open Seas. Ananya didn't want to eat lunch with her colleagues, preferring to go out shopping or leaving early to work from home. A workforce that previously was very close knit suddenly felt disjointed. Jessie tried to talk to Ananya about her behaviour once but was unceremoniously ignored. "Mind your own business, kid" was her curt retort. Jessie felt that, perhaps, she was not being taken seriously because she was significantly younger than Ananya. Slowly, Ananya became harder and harder to work with for the other employees as well. She would openly contradict and mock her colleagues' suggestions. She would delegate tasks that were assigned to her. She would refuse to compromise on disagreements. Worse, she frequently blamed her own mistakes on the suppliers or even the customers, sometimes shouting at them over the phone.

“What is this doing to our company image?” Jessie thought on a weekly basis. During this time, the one person Ananya would talk to was her manager, Unni. She would joke with him, ask personal questions, make a concerted effort to get to know him, but no one else at the company. She also seemed to time her outbursts to when he wasn’t in the office, so everyone else noticed her behaviour, but the boss remained oblivious. Jessie hoped that Unni would eventually see flashes of Ananya’s unprofessionalism. But, as the months rolled by, he continued to be unaware of the brewing turmoil at Open Seas.

Jessie wanted to confront Unni about Ananya’s conduct, but worried that it would make her look petty or difficult. She wasn’t alone. Maria Lobo in design and Suresh Kutty in accounting had also noticed this antisocial behaviour but were unwilling to talk to the boss. Jessie dealt with Ananya the most, due to their respective roles, but she was unsure how to approach Unni about what she’d seen. She wondered if a direct confrontation would risk her own job, but she was determined to do something to get her old work atmosphere back.

### **Questions**

**Q1.** How can Jessie approach Unni about Ananya’s behaviour? What evidence can she present?

Should Jessie recruit the other employees to provide a more unified front? Why or why not?

**Q2.** Is the age difference alone enough to explain the differing behaviors? What else could be causing the work friction?