

PGDM RM 2017-19
Business Communication
RM 207

Trimester-II End-Term Examination: December 2017

Time Allowed: 2 hrs. 30 mins

Maximum Marks: 50

Please note:

- The question paper has **3 sections**: All Sections must be attempted as directed.
- **SECTION C is compulsory case study.**
- Do not include any information that reveals your identity in any of your answers.

SECTION A

Attempt any THREE

[Marks: 3*5=15]

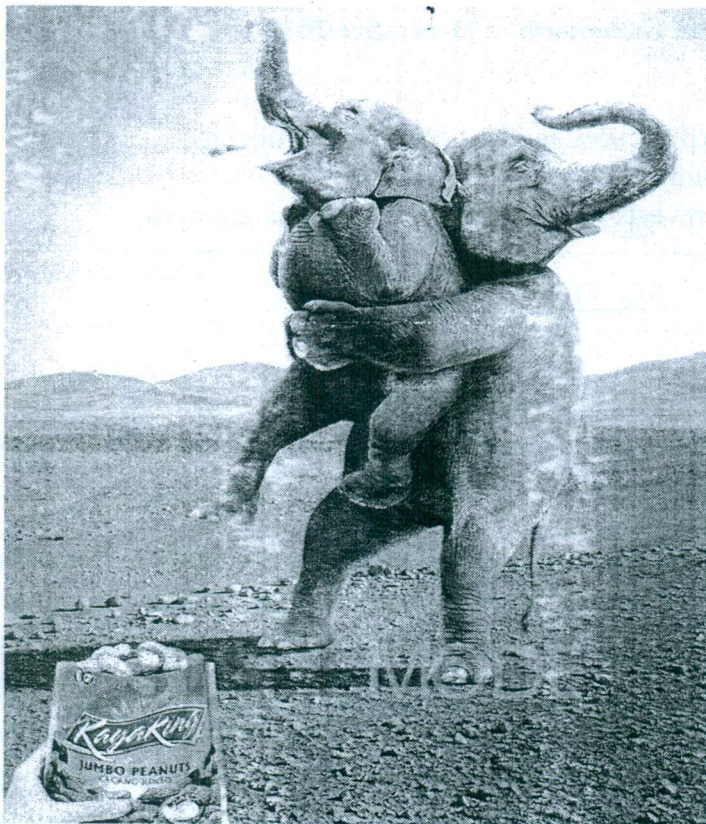
Q1. Briefly discuss the communication barriers in the following situation. Also provide a solution on how one can remove such barriers.

Siddhartha Juneja, who was brought up in the USA, had recently joined an organization situated in Kolkata, India, as the Marketing Manager. He was asked to make a presentation to his team members about future planning and strategies for increase in sales. The company had high expectations from young and dynamic Siddhartha. The team members included some elderly senior members who had grudges against Siddhartha being appointed as their leader. Siddhartha decided to start the presentation by making a comparative analysis of the sales over last six months and then discuss future projections and strategies. He prepared a power point presentation for the discussion so as to enhance visual demonstration. The senior employees who were already not very receptive to Siddhartha, and were also not comfortable using technological equipment, started criticizing him. During the presentation, Siddhartha faced some technical issues related to microphone and laptop arrangements which created disturbance, leading to personal discussions amongst the audience. Although Siddhartha managed to complete the presentation amidst technical glitches and hostile audience, he felt that the interaction was not fruitful.

Q2. How do High- context cultures differ from Low- context cultures? Analyze the following anecdote explaining High-Context and Low-Context Culture.

A Western intern (let's say a German), who is doing an internship in a Chinese company. He was told to be patient with the tasks, those will be given to him probably a little bit later, first he should get to know his colleagues better. Then it is easier to assign tasks to him. After one week only sitting around, he will start checking Facebook and newspaper websites regularly during work-time. After two weeks, he started leaving the company about one hour earlier and complained to his friends that he had nothing to do, even though his colleagues seemed to be nice in a way. He started doubting the intention of the company. His motivation became low.

3. What does the acronym AIDA stand for? Does this printed advertisement (given below) follow the AIDA principle? Justify your answer.



Q4. With reference to effective business writing improve and rewrite the following sentences for positive impact:

- a) Your negligence in this matter caused the damage to the equipment.
- b) I have no experience other than writing accounts in my uncle's garments store.
- c) We have received your undated letter, which you sent to the wrong office.
- d) Do not walk on the grass.
- e) You cannot visit our plant except on Saturdays.

Q5. Your clothing store – part of a National Chain – has recently moved to a new location. You would like for those customers who patronized your store in its previous location to continue to shop with you. Write all the local customers for whom you have mailing addresses and invite them to visit you at your new location. You can offer them a limited-time-only coupon to sweeten the invitation but your message should also remind them why they like to shop at your store. Remember to tell them about the benefits that this new store has. Think of the verbal content that will entice your customers to shop with you and prepare this persuasive email. Draft only the main message.

SECTION B

Attempt any TWO

[Marks: 10*2=20]

Q1. An American, Ross Hutchinson, was hired as a trainer for a US company that has a new branch office in India. He was sent to the office to facilitate the training of new employees. After a fruitful brainstorming session with the leadership team, he asked the HR Manager Prasun, who is an Indian, for all the documents regarding the need analyses and future plan that he will be needing to go forward. He asked when Prasun will be able to submit the same. Prasun, who was extremely busy with a lot of work, quickly replied that he will submit these required documents the next day. Prasun's boss intervened saying that it would easily take two weeks for Prasun to complete the necessary documents. Prasun looks embarrassed and nods in agreement. Back in office Ross was wondering why Prasun agreed to such an unrealistic deadline. Why was he keen to give a pleasing answer?

- a) Analyze the above situation and highlight the importance of Cultural Intelligence.
- b) In view of the above case let justify the statement: "The Geert Hofstede analysis shows India as a large power distance society".

Q2. Analyze the message given below and answer the following questions.

Subject: Bill Adjustment

To Whom It May Concern:

I just received a bill for Rs. 20,000/ for the winter party that I held for my employees at the Regal Banquet Centre. I absolutely refuse to pay this amount for the subpar job you did of hosting this event.

First, you put us in an unpleasant room with no windows even though we had made our reservations weeks in advance. The room was also much too warm. I asked your staff to adjust the temperature, but apparently they never did. Since the room didn't have any windows we just had to sit there and swelter in our dresses. As if this weren't bad enough, it took the servers so long to bring all our food out that some people had finished eating before others were even served. This made a complete mess of the nice dinner and the scheduled program. All in all it was a disgusting experience.

I had heard good things about your centre but now regret that I choose it for this important company event. The uncomfortable and chaotic experience reflected poorly on me and on my appreciation for my employees. Though the food was OK but you have been a pathetic failure in giving us service. Enclosed is my payment of Rs 10,000, which I feel is more than fair.

Yours truly
J Saxena, Owner and President.

1. Comment on the appropriateness of the sender's tone to a vendor. Point out the phrases / expressions that you find inappropriate.
2. Rewrite the reply according to the principles of effective writing in business.

Q3.

- a) Describe the three Rhetorical devices propounded by Aristotle for effective persuasion? Give instances of application of each in workplace communication.
- b) Analyze the following statements and identify which Aristotelian persuasive appeal is used for each?

- "History has shown time and again that absolute power corrupts absolutely."
- "As a doctor, I am qualified to tell you that this course of treatment will likely generate the best results."
- "You'll make the right decision because you have something that not many people do: you have heart."
- "Based on the dozens of archaeological expeditions I've made all over the world, I am confident that those potsherds are Mesopotamian in origin."
- "I'm not just invested in this community – I love every building, every business, and every hard-working member of this town."
- "You don't need to jump off a bridge to know that it's a bad idea. Why then would you need to try drugs to know if they're damaging? That's plain nonsense."

SECTION C

COMPULSORY CASE STUDY

[3*5=15 Marks]

At 8:45 am on September 11, 2001, John Murphy, the CEO of Oppenheimer Funds, was out for a run in lower Manhattan's Battery Park. He was thinking about the company's reorganization plan, which he had announced the day before, when suddenly he saw an explosion near the top of the north tower of the World Trade Centre. He stopped to watch black smoke pour from the place of impact—an awful lot of smoke, it seemed, for what was probably a small plane that had lost its way. He thought of his own employees in the neighbouring south tower and made a mental note not to renew Oppenheimer's lease in that building. "First the bombing in 1993 and now a plane accident," he thought. "What's next?" He continued jogging, now in the direction of the office.

At the same moment, some 1,600 miles away, Timothy Doke was fighting rush-hour traffic on his way to American Airlines headquarters in Dallas. His pager went off at the same time his cell phone started ringing. As Doke, American's vice president of corporate communications, scrambled to answer the phone and fish the pager out of his pocket, a sinking feeling came over him—a feeling made worse by a voice on the phone informing him that one of American's flights out of Boston had been hijacked. Doke passed the exit to his office and headed for the next one, which would take him to American's strategic command centre, the company's hub for handling crisis situations.

Back in New York City, Mary Beth Bardin was in a cab on the traffic-snarled streets of midtown Manhattan on her way to a breakfast meeting when she, too, saw smoke billowing into the otherwise clear blue skies. "Something must be on fire downtown," she thought. The cabdriver turned on the radio, and Bardin was stunned to hear that a jetliner had crashed into one of the World Trade Center's towers. Traffic ground to a halt, and Bardin, executive vice president of public affairs and communications at Verizon, jumped out of the cab and headed on foot to her company's offices at 42nd Street and Sixth Avenue. She immediately thought about the 2,200 Verizon employees working in lower Manhattan, especially those located in the World Trade Centre and in Verizon Wireless's store there. Could they have been hurt? Her pace quickened, and she reached for her cell phone to let headquarters know she was on her way in.

Many companies have faced disasters in the past. What was unique about the events of September 11 was the breadth of their impact on business. Some companies lost scores of employees. Many others saw key components of their infrastructure destroyed, at least temporarily. A still larger group had to struggle with secondary effects—customers requiring heroic levels of service, suppliers unable to fill orders, breakdowns in transportation and communication, collapses in demand. And every company in the country had to deal with traumatized and bewildered workers. Suddenly, crisis management was every executive's job.

I've spoken with many managers about their experiences and how they responded to the events of 9/11. Some of them, like John Murphy and Mary Beth Bardin, were near Ground Zero. Others, like Tim Doke, were far away from the site of the attacks but were nevertheless buffeted by their impact.

What I discovered is that, in a time of extreme crisis, internal communications take precedence. Before any other constructive action can take place—whether it's serving customers or reassuring investors—the morale of employees must be rebuilt. In the words of Ray O'Rourke, managing director for global corporate affairs at Morgan Stanley in New York, "We knew within the first day that, even though we are a financial services company, we didn't have a financial crisis on our hands; we had a human crisis. After that point, everything was focused on our people."

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In my conversations with a range of executives, I was able to distil five lessons that I think can serve as guide-posts for any company facing a crisis that undermines its employees' composure, confidence, or concentration. Many of these lessons relate to preparation—to establishing plans and mechanisms for emergency action. But if 9/11 taught us anything, it's that we can't anticipate every contingency. Sometimes, we have no choice but to improvise. Here, too, the experiences I uncovered can serve as useful models. Improvisation, after all, is most effective when a strong corporate mission and vision are already in place to inform and guide it.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Whether natural or man-made, disasters often disrupt normal flows of communication. Phone lines and power lines may be destroyed. Computer networks may go down. Groups of employees may be stranded or isolated. To reach their people, managers often had to be creative in using unusual communication channels.

Looking at the crisis as described in the above case, which communication channel would you choose as a head of the organization to reach the employees and all other stakeholders in order to inform that soon the company will start functioning? Make a list of at least 3 probable channels and justify your choice.

2. Just as a death in the family often brings people closer together, so did the catastrophe on 9/11. Many of the executives talked about how their companies sustained that sense of community long after 9/11 by keeping the lines of communication open. Imagine yourself as the head of corporate communication and draft a letter for the employees assuring them that you were a family, and that doesn't wear off, as long as one is consistent in believing the company's vision. Fabricate necessary details.
3. Write a brief note on the importance of communication strategy for an organization at the time of a crisis. Provide an example to justify your point.