Aryabhatta Knowledge University (AKU)

Civil Engineering

Humanities - I

Solved Exam Paper 2019

Question. Write in about 250 words about following:

a) Communication at workplace

Communication in the workplace is one of the signs of a high-performance culture. Exchanging information and ideas within an organization is called workplace communication. However, effective communication occurs when a message is sent and received accurately. In every aspect of life (both professional and personal), effective communication is important to success and happiness. Effective communication in the workplace is central to all business goals.

It avoids confusion

It provides purpose

It builds a positive company culture

It creates accountability

Improving communication starts at the top to meet your business intent. Often, effective communication at the workplace is what distinguishes a good leader from a great one. Communication at workplace defines organizational goals and helps coworkers collaborate. This is a step towards a fundamental business practice

for a committed and productive workforce. In a study, companies ranked communication skills twice as important as managerial skills. Here are the skills that employers mostly seek in new hires, ranked in terms of priority.

Oral communication

Listening

Written communication

Public speaking

Adaptability

It's vital to measure communication so you can see what works, what doesn't, and tweak it accordingly. Workplace communication is important to your growth and success. It allows everyone to share their inputs and feel that their ideas are being valued.

Effective communication strategies we can use at work to increase productivity?

Start using the right tools for your business

Fortunately, tools like Proof Hub, Slack, and Zoom can help you boost company communication providing a total seamless communication experience.

Encourage two-way communication

Encourage your employees to ask questions or voice their opinions helping them feel empowered.

Tell people what they are doing right

It is a good idea to tell people about their good things on a daily basis.

Specific and descriptive feedback

Give feedback that is concrete. Give directions to the person exactly on what they are doing well and what needs to be improved.

Schedule a compulsory check-in

Organizing a short quick call with a very specific agenda brings in a lot of advantages.

Organize engaging team building activities

According to a 2017 report, companies with engaged workers generally earn 2.5-times more revenue. Team building activities enhance productivity and engagement.

Timely examine the strategy of your communication so that it reaps gains to the company.

Communication can be formal, informal, internal or external. And within an organization, it is important to develop a healthy and beneficial communication process. Effective communication is the key to achieving long-term success, so make sure you follow the above outline strategies. No matter what stage you are in the workplace, you need to communicate ideas well in the workplace, so effective communication.

b) Role and responsibility of engineer

The responsibilities of an engineer, if not taken proper care of, results in the adverse effects just like the above discussed incidents. In this chapter, we will discuss the responsibilities of an engineer.

Loyalty to corporations, respect for authority, collegiality and other teamwork are a few important virtues in the field of Engineering. Professionalism in engineering would be threatened at every turn in a

corporation driven with powerful egos. Robert Jackall, a Sociologist criticizes professionalism saying, "what is right in the corporation is what the guy above you wants from you. That's what morality is in the corporation."

In order to understand how good the ethical factors in a corporate world should be, let us consider the following points −

Ethical values in their full complexity are widely acknowledged and appreciated by managers and employees alike.

In an ethical corporate climate, the use of ethical language is honestly applied and recognized as a legitimate part of corporate dialogue.

Top management sets a moral tone in words, in policies and by personal example.

The procedures should be followed for conflict resolution.

Loyalty

Loyalty is the faithful adherence to an organization and the employer. Loyalty to an employer can be either of the two types −

Agency-loyalty − Agency-loyalty is acting to fulfil one's contractual duties to an employer. This is entirely a matter of actions, such as doing one's job and not stealing from one's employer, irrespective of the motive behind it.

Attitude-loyalty − Attitude-loyalty has a lot to do with attitudes, emotions and a sense of personal identity as it does with actions. It can be understood that people who work grudgingly and spitefully are not loyal; in spite of the fact they may adequately perform all their work responsibilities and hence manifest agencyloyalty.

Collegiality

Collegiality is the term that describes a work environment where responsibility and authority are shared among the colleagues. When Engineering codes of ethics mention collegiality, they generally cite acts that constitute disloyalty. The disloyalty of professionals towards an organization, reflects the attitude they have towards the work environment for the salaries they are paid and the trust the company has for them.

The National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) Code, for example, states that "Engineers shall not attempt to injure, maliciously or falsely, directly or indirectly, the professional reputation, prospects, practice or employment of other engineers. Engineers who believe others are guilty of unethical or illegal practice shall present such information to the proper authority for action".

Following are the major types of authority −

Executive Authority − the corporate or institutional right given to a person to exercise power based on the resources of an organization.

Expert Authority − this is the possession of special knowledge, skill or competence to perform a particular task or to give sound advice.

According to the goals of the company, the hierarchical authority is distributed. A service oriented or engineer-oriented company concentrates on the quality of the products which are decided by the engineers as they are the subject matter experts. Whereas a company when it is customer-oriented company, focuses primarily on the satisfaction of the customers. Hence the goal of the company decides the power between a General Manager and a Technical Manager or an Engineer.

Collective Bargaining

It is the responsibility of an organization to look into the welfare of the section of people working in it. Their issues need to be discussed.

When we discuss issues, there can be issues which need to be discussed among the employees themselves and resolutions can be found for the same. However, there can be issues which might require the intervention of the management. In order to deal with such complex situations, an Employee Union is formed wherein, each employee becomes a member and a leader is elected to represent the group whenever needed.

At the time of conflicts or arguments, there will arise the need for negotiation between the parties. Conflicting situations which call for negotiation might occur on areas related to pay scales, working hours, training, health and safety, overtime, grievance mechanisms, rights in work places or company affairs, etc. The process of voluntary negotiations between the employers and a group of employees to resolve the conflicts is called Collective Bargaining.

The parties often refer to the result of the negotiation as a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) or as a Collective Employment Agreement (CEA).

Collective Bargaining

The underlying idea of collective bargaining is that the employer and employee relations should not be decided unilaterally or with the intervention of any third party. Both the parties must reconcile their differences voluntarily through negotiations, yielding some concessions and making sacrifices in the process. Both should bargain from a position of strength. There should be no attempt to exploit the weaknesses or vulnerability of one party.

With such an awareness, the necessity of formation of Unions was observed in all the organizations and the idea was strengthened to form larger labor unions. Both parties have, more or less, realized the importance of peaceful co-existence for mutual benefit and continued progress.

Question. What are some good time management skills?

It's very important that you don't confuse time management skills (or any other set of skills) with time management techniques or even personality traits.

Personality traits are features of your character. They are an integral part of your personality, shaped by your genes and (early) life experiences. They are very hard to change; almost impossible in the short or mid-term.

"Time management" refers to the way that you organize and plan how long you spend on specific activities.

It may seem counter-intuitive to dedicate precious time to learning about time management, instead of using it to get on with your work, but the benefits are enormous:

Greater productivity and efficiency.

A better professional reputation.

Less stress.

Increased opportunities for advancement.

Greater opportunities to achieve important life and career goals.

Answering the phone is urgent. If you don't do it, the caller will ring off, and you won't know why they called—and it might be important. It may also, however, be an automated voice telling you that you may be eligible for compensation for having been mis-sold insurance. That's not important.

Going to the dentist regularly is important (or so we're told). If you don't, you may get gum disease, or other problems. But it's not urgent. If you leave it too long, however, it may become urgent because you may get toothache.

Picking your children up from school is both urgent and important. If you are not there at the right time, they will be waiting in the playground or the classroom, worrying about where you are. You may also inconvenience others such as teachers who are waiting with your children for you to arrive.

Reading funny emails or checking Facebook is neither urgent nor important. So why is it the first thing that you do each day? See our page minimizing distractions to help you recognize and avoid other things that may distract you from getting your urgent and important tasks done.

Question. Write notes on any two of following:

a) Technical writing

Technical writing is a type of writing where the author is writing about a particular subject that requires direction, instruction, or explanation. This style of writing has a very different purpose and different characteristics than other writing styles such as creative writing, academic writing or business writing.

Technical writing is straightforward, easy to understand explanations and/or instructions dealing with a particular subject. It is an efficient and clear way of explaining something and how it works.

The subject of technical writing can either be:

Tangible - Something that can be seen or touched, such as a computer or software program, or information on how to assemble a piece of furniture.

Abstract - Something that involved a series of steps that aren't related to a tangible object. One example of this might be steps required to complete an office process.

Some examples of technical writing include:

Instruction manuals

Policy manuals

Process manuals

User manuals

Reports of analysis

Instructions for assembling a product

A summarization of a long report that highlights and shortens the most important elements

Regardless of the type of document which is written, technical writing requires the writer to follow the properties of knowing their audience, writing in a clear, non-personal style and doing extensive research on the topic. By including these properties, the writer can create clear instructions and explanations for the reader.

Know your audience. An expert in the field will understand certain abbreviations, acronyms, and lingo that directly applies to such a field. The novice will not understand in the same manner and, therefore, every detail must be explained and spelled out for them.

Use an impersonal style. Write from a third person perspective, like a teacher instructing a student. Any opinions should be omitted.

The writing should be straightforward, to the point, and as simple as possible to make sure the reader understands the process or instruction. This at times may appear as simply a list of steps to take to achieve the desired goal or may be a short or lengthy explanation of a concept or abstract idea.

Know how to research. Gather information from a number of sources,

understand the information gathered so that it can be analyzed thoroughly, and then put the information into an easy to understand format to instruct those who read it. The more inexperienced your audience, the more information you will need to gather and explain.

Be thorough in description and provide enough detail to make your points; but, you also have to consider that you need to use an economy of words so that you do not bore your reader with gratuitous details.

A good technical writer can make a difficult task easy and can quickly explain a complex piece of information.

b) Importance of time management

Time management is the strategy of planning out your available time and controlling the amount of time you spend on specific tasks in order to work more efficiently. Effective time management comes easier to some people than to others, but everyone can develop habits to improve their time management skills. Without strong time management, your work and wellbeing can suffer, and it can lead to:

Producing poor quality work

Missing deadlines

Increasing your stress levels

Ruining your work-life balance

Harming your professional reputation

Time management is important because it helps you control your workday so you can build your business without compromising your work-life balance. Here are seven benefits of proper time management:

IMPROVE YOUR PERFORMANCE

When you learn to block time out of your day for all your important tasks, you'll have a better idea of everything you need to accomplish and how long each task should take. When you have a schedule to follow, you'll likely find that you spend less time deciding what to work on or procrastinating and more time getting down to important work. Time management can help you focus on just the essential tasks ahead of you and avoid time-consuming distractions.

PRODUCE BETTER WORK

When you're not constantly racing to meet a deadline, you can put more effort and thought into your work. Time management helps you prioritize your tasks so that you ensure you have enough time available to complete every project. The quality of your work increases when you're not rushing to complete it ahead of a fast approaching deadline.

DELIVER WORK ON TIME

Properly managing your time involves assigning every task on your list to a specific blocks of time. Many people use time management to allow themselves several days to complete a project, or finish it ahead of the due date to provide a buffer for any challenges that might arise. If you properly schedule the time needed to complete your work, you'll be able to hit your deadlines every time.

REDUCE YOUR STRESS

It's easy to become anxious when you have a full list of tasks to accomplish both for work and in your personal life. Good time management can help you prioritize your to-do list and set aside the time needed for your most important tasks, so you know exactly what you need to do and how much time you have available to complete everything. Prioritizing your tasks and giving yourself enough time to accomplish them can help reduce your stress levels.

IMPROVED CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Time management can help you become a more reliable employee who always submits high-quality work by your due dates. This in turn will make you more valuable as a worker and improve your professional reputation, which can help you find new opportunities to expand your career.

BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE

When you manage your time properly and successfully meet your deadlines, you'll feel a sense of accomplishment and confidence in your abilities. Consistently finishing your daily to-do list is a huge motivator that can drive people to further improve their time management skills and take on new work opportunities.

BECOME MORE EFFICIENT

When you understand how to manage your time effectively, you'll become more focused at work which allows you to accomplish more with less time available. For example, instead of trying to work on a big project when you have fifteen minutes free before a meeting, you can accomplish a few small tasks in that time and save the bigger tasks that require more brain power for when you have a large block of time free. You'll be able to work more efficiently to achieve more with less time.

c) Self-esteem

Confidence in one's value as a human being is a precious psychological resource and generally a highly positive factor in life; it is correlated with achievement, good relationships, and satisfaction. Possessing little self-regard can lead people to become depressed, to fall short of their potential, or to tolerate abusive relationships and situations.

Too much self-love, on the other hand, results in an off-putting sense of entitlement and an inability to learn from failures. It can also be a sign of clinical narcissism, in which individuals may behave in a self-

centered, arrogant, and manipulative manner. Perhaps no other self-help topic has spawned so much advice and so many (often conflicting) theories.

People who experience a steady diet of disapproval from important others—family, supervisors, friends, teachers—might have feelings of low self-esteem. Yet the healthy individual is able to weather off-putting evaluations.

Each person's experience is different, but over the course of the lifespan, self-esteem seems to rise and fall in predictable, systematic ways. Research suggests that self-esteem grows, by varying degrees, until age 60, when it remains steady before beginning to decline in old age.

Self-esteem can influence life in myriad ways, from academic and professional success to relationships and mental health. Self-esteem, however, is not an immutable characteristic; successes or setbacks, both personal and professional, can fuel fluctuations in feelings of self-worth.

The confident person is easily spotted and commands attention. But there's a healthy balance between too little and too much self-worth. Here are some signs that an individual has the right dose.

Knows the difference between confidence and arrogance

Is not afraid of feedback

Does not people-please or seek approval

Is not afraid of conflict

Is able to set boundaries

Is able to voice needs and opinions

Is assertive, but not pushy

Is not a slave to perfection?

Is not afraid of setbacks

Does not fear failure

Does not feel inferior

Accepts who they are

d) Human Factors in communication

Communication is concerned with the creation, transmission, interpretation and use of information. There are four basic steps to communication:

Intent: the sender has information that they wish to communicate to others;

Transmission: the sender chooses a method to convey the information (e.g. speech, writing, signs);

Receipt: the receiver hears or sees the information;

Interpretation: the receiver makes sense of the information that they have received.

However, what is interpreted is often different to what was intended – leading to a communication failure.

Effective communication is important in all organizations when key information must be passed between two or more people, or when a task and its associated responsibilities are handed over to another person or work team. Critical times when good communication must be assured include: at shift handover, between shift and day workers, between different functions of an organization within a shift (e.g. operations and maintenance; pilots and air traffic control; control room and outside operators) and during process upsets and

emergencies.

There are a number of barriers to good communications:

Not realizing that we need to communicate information to others;

We hear what we expect to hear;

We often ignore information that conflicts with what we already know or believe;

Our view of the communicator (such as credibility or respect) affects our view of the message;

Our understanding or belief in a message can be influenced by social or work groups;

The same words mean different things to different people;

We may use words that others do not understand;

Our body language may conflict with what we say, leading to confusion;

A lack of concentration may influence our communication or understanding (for example, due to stress or fatigue);

Aspects of the environment may affect the quality of communication, such as a noisy or distracting environment.

Any of the above factors may lead to poor communications, such as missing or inaccurate information and misunderstandings.

Improving communications

There are four key aspects that we can address to improve communications:

● make clear the need to communicate;

- provide guidance on what is to be communicated, when, and who to;

- train and coach people to communicate effectively;

- Provide the time, facilities and environment that enable good communication.

A number of simple steps can improve communications:

Use face-to-face communication, as this enables interaction and the use of non-verbal cues;

Tailor the message and its delivery to the person(s) receiving and acting on the information;

Continue to check that the message is being received correctly, for example by getting feedback from the receiver – make it a two-way communication;

if using verbal communication, tell people what you are going to say, say it, and then tell them what you have said, for example by paraphrasing;

Use simple and direct language, with a low 'reading age' (word-processing software can check this);

Cut out the transmission of unnecessary information;

Use aids such as written records, photographs and illustrations to support spoken words;

Repeat the key information using different channels, such as both written and verbal communication;

Allow sufficient time for communication, particularly when handing over from one shift or work group to another;

Encourage listeners to ask questions, seek confirmation and

clarification and repeat-back key information.

Question. What are the key factors to consider when setting goals?

Setting goals is how you grow your company and achieve success. The process of creating goals is influenced by many internal and external factors. To understand the basics of developing effective corporate goals, you need to be familiar with the key factors that shape effective goal setting. This will help you address the limitations and challenges that can occur during goal development.

Feasibility

A goal that is too easy to reach can give you a premature sense of accomplishment, while a goal that is too difficult to attain can cause an unnecessary drain on resources. The feasibility of a goal has a significant effect on its benefit to your organization. Use historical data, current market trends and an analysis of your company resources to develop realistic goals that will help you grow your company without putting yourself out of business.

Time Frame

The methods you will use to attain a specific business goal will depend on the time you give yourself to complete it. A goal with a more extended time frame may be more costly but may ultimately yield greater returns than one with an immediate deadline. But a shorter duration can allow you to experiment with new business ideas while limiting their potential negative effects.

Resources

Your company resources are a significant factor in the goals you set. If you lack the personnel to accomplish a goal, then you may have to hire more employees. But an analysis of your financial situation might indicate that you can't afford more staff at this point. Balancing

resources is a critical part of creating business plans and setting and prioritizing goals.

Results

The results of previous business plans are instrumental in setting goals. Develop a performance-measurement system that will help you determine the success or failure of your business plan. Learn from the failures and catalog the successes to help develop more effective business approaches in the future.

Question. What are the basic principles of office etiquette?

Talking of Office etiquette, it is a set of implicit rules for professionalism and courtesy practice of employees. Office etiquette allows employees to build relationships with colleagues and clients. That helps employees move forward in their careers. So, everyone should learn the basic principles of Office etiquette to make the workplace compatible.

Etiquette:

In general, etiquette is a code of conduct in society or among members of a particular profession or group. In short, the behavior or method of communicating with others that we have learned since childhood.

Therefore, everyone should follow principles of Office etiquette & manners to make the workplace compatible.

Maintain office punctuality:

Punctuality not only means coming ten minutes early in the office but also be on time to attend meetings, presentations, or seminars. It shows you the respect and value of colleagues who are working with you.

If you are unable to reach the office on time you should inform the subordinate 10-20 min earlier, so that they can adjust the schedule accordingly.

Never yell at other team members:

Most often, it occurs with juniors or less experienced employees. Needless to say, using a higher pitch in the voice or the reflection of anger and aggression is a clear sign of non-professionalism.

Since not everyone can understand what you want to, be polite with them. Make them understand what you want them to do with a gentle smile.

Act as a team player:

One of the rules of office etiquette is to open, communicate, and interact with your team members as much as possible. Be sure to listen to the other person's opinion.

Of course, you may not always agree, but be open and try to find some common areas, as you can learn something new and gain the respect of your colleagues.

Always maintain tidiness:

Your desk/workstation reflects your thoughts so if it is untidy then you are choked as a person with unclear thoughts. Moreover, your messy desk can disturb others and distract you from the professional image of the company you're trying to convey.

So, whenever you use or share your desk please accurately keep your things. Following table manners, others consider you as an organized & responsible employee of the organization.

Maintain proper dress code:

Always wear the appropriate clothing for your office. Wear modest,

conservative neat clothing. Remember, what you wear signifies a lot about who you are. Also, it refers to how aware you are of your skills and knowledge about your work.

Further, make sure you bathe and use deodorant daily. This is an important practice of corporate etiquette when you are working in the United States.

Make the noise as low as possible:

Most of the time the phone rings loud during meetings or an important presentation with clients. This disturbs others. It forcibly makes them treat you as an undisciplined employee. This could be great harm to both of you and the organization's reputation.

So, always keep your phones in vibrate mode that doesn't interrupt the environment. This silly mistake can hamper your career as well.

Be always tolerant:

There are different people and personalities in the workplace. Try to accommodate all the differences between you and your colleagues.

Always keep an open mind to listen to the different points of view of co-workers with the intent. This will help you to be more focused on your job.

Treat your colleague with respect:

Criticizing or making fun of other ideas is considered as a very bad manner in every workplace. There must be a difference in everyone's point of view. Respect their opinions.

If you don't like someone's idea you should make him/her understand without using any negative impression or make fun of it. Passing any vulgar comments to your colleagues is clear violence of official etiquette.

Always try to give your best:

One of the best ways to get out of the crowd is to try your best every moment. You can start it going through the office door each morning. Don't focus on other people. Even if they do notice. Don't care for recognition.

People still think that they are better than you, even if they see that you have done very well. Do your best to increase your self-pride. Always be proud of it. Do it for self-esteem. Then stick to it.

Don't waste time gossiping:

Never engage in offensive gossip or office politics. These spread fast in the office environment. So, be safe against running and deploying them.

Further, blame games have never been successful for anyone. Don't discuss anyone's personal life in off times. It will give a bad impact on your relationship with co-workers.

Question. What is the relationship between social responsibility and ethics?

Social responsibility is an ethical theory in which individuals are accountable for fulfilling their civic duty, and the actions of an individual must benefit the whole of society. In this way, there must be a balance between economic growth and the welfare of society and the environment. If this equilibrium is maintained, then social responsibility is accomplished.

The theory of social responsibility is built on a system of ethics, in which decisions and actions must be ethically validated before proceeding. If the action or decision causes harm to society or the environment, then it would be considered to be socially irresponsible.

Moral values that are inherent in society create a distinction between right and wrong. In this way, social fairness is believed (by most) to be in the "right", but more frequently than not this "fairness" is absent. Every individual has a responsibility to act in a manner that is beneficial to society and not solely to the individual.

The theory of social responsibility and ethics applies in both individual and group capacities. It should be incorporated into daily actions/decisions, particularly ones that will have an effect on other persons and/or the environment. In the larger, group capacity, a code of social responsibility and ethics is applied within said group as well as during interactions with another group or an individual.

Businesses have developed a system of social responsibility that is tailored to their company environment. If social responsibility is maintained within a company, then the employees and the environment are held equal to the company's economics. Maintaining social responsibility within a company ensures the integrity of society and the environment are protected.

Often, the ethical implications of a decision/action are overlooked for personal gain and the benefits are usually material. This frequently manifests itself in companies that attempt to cheat environmental regulations. When this happens, government interference is necessary.

Question? How can I improve my self- assessment skills?

Self-assessment is a simple skill that can be acquired by anyone. A systematic approach can be adopted for developing and improving this skill. Otherwise, ordinary simple approaches and practices can be helpful.

Ask questions. An important aspect of self-assessment is the ability to ask questions. Develop the ability to ask specific and relevant questions. You cannot ask and answer every question in the world

and not every question is relevant. Ask yourself questions about what, how, and why you have a problem at doing something or how and why you succeeded in something.

Script down clear-cut objectives. Being able to give an honest and objective assessment of yourself is the toughest aspect of the entire process. Write down the targets for the most important aspects or goals of your work and assess your performance in comparison to each of them. Compare the actual performance or results to the target you set in the beginning of the year.

Develop a personal grading system. Create a grading system for yourself – formal assessments use grading systems for evaluations. For instance; if you are a sales person, the most important skill required is communication and the most important task is to generate sales. You may have an evaluation sheet for skills alone that shows something like this: Communication 30%, Self confidence20%, friendliness 30%, enthusiasm 10%, and self-confidence 10%. In the end, use an objective means to determine your achievement.

Question. In not more than 150 words, write about 'business ethics'

Business ethics comprises all these values and principles and helps in guiding the behavior in the organizations. Businesses should have a balance between the needs of the stakeholders and their desire to make profits.

While maintaining these balances, many times businesses require to do tradeoffs. To combat such scenarios, rules and principles are formed in the organization.

This ensures that businesses gain money without affecting the individuals or society as a whole. The ethics involved in the businesses reflect the philosophy of that organization.

One of these policies determines the fundamentals of that organization. As a result, businesses often have ethical principles. There is a list of ethical principles involved in the businesses.

Acting ethically ultimately means determining what is "right" and what is "wrong." Basic standards exist around the world that dictate what is wrong or unethical in terms of business practices.

For example, unsafe working conditions are generally considered unethical because they put workers in danger. An example of this is a crowded work floor with only one means of exit. In the event of an emergency – such as a fire – workers could become trapped or might be trampled on as everyone heads for the only means of escape.

While some unethical business practices are obvious or true for companies around the world, they do still occur. Determining what practices are ethical or not is more difficult to determine if they exist in a grey area where the lines between ethical and unethical can become blurred.

For example, assume Company A works with a contact at Company B, an individual through which they negotiate all the prices for supplies they buy from Company B. Company A naturally wants to get the best prices on the supplies. When the individual from Company B comes to their home office to negotiate a new contract, they put him up in a top-tier hotel, in the very best suite, and make sure that all his wants and needs are met while he's there.

In technical terms, the practice is not illegal. However, it might be considered a grey area – close to, but not quite, bribery – because the individual is then likely to be more inclined to give Company A a price break at the expense of getting the best deal for his own company.