

**Online Communication in the Digital Age**  
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**Lecture – 12**  
**Workplace Communication**

Good morning, dear friends and welcome to this module. In the previous module, we had looked at what constitutes technical communication, what are its challenges in the digital age and its evolving features across diverse fields of expertise. In today's module, we will further delve into the facets of workplace communication and the different skills required to attain enhanced productivity in workplace keeping pace with the advancement in the digital communication media.

## Introduction to Workplace Communication

- Workplace communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, and messages between individuals or groups within an organization.
- It includes both structured and casual interactions, taking place at various hierarchical levels such as
  - interpersonal communication between colleagues or
  - team communication between managers and employees.
- Communication enables organizing by coordinating human activities, facilitating task accomplishment, network sharing, control, and management.

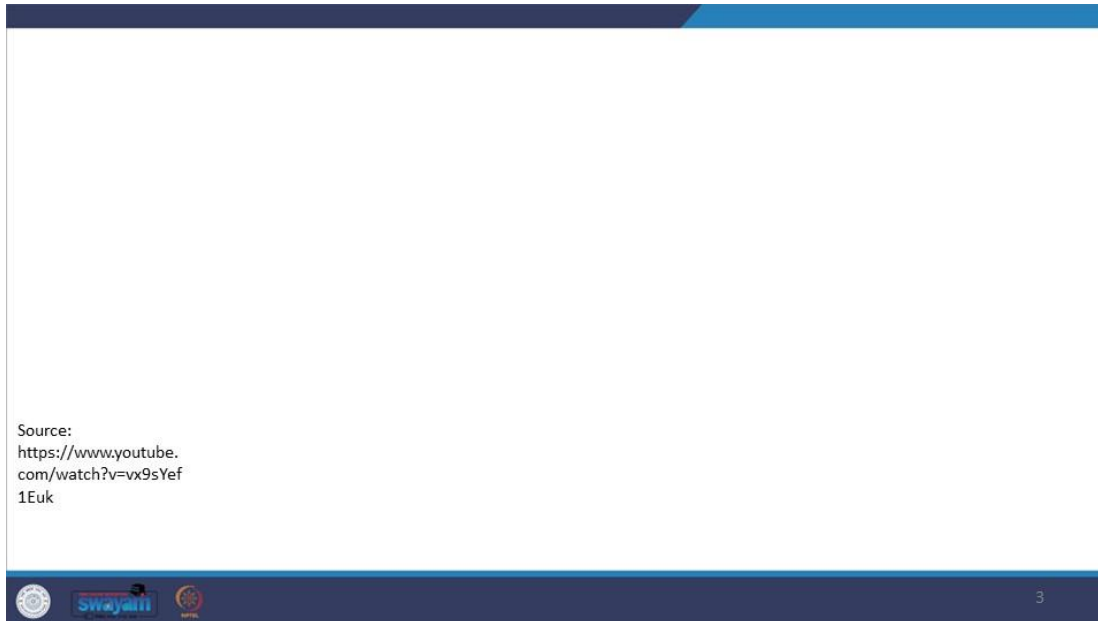


Source: Powerpoint

Workplace communication can be understood as a process of exchanging information, ideas and messages between and amongst individuals and groups within an organization primarily. It includes both structured as well as casual interactions taking place at various hierarchical levels such as interpersonal lateral communication between colleagues and team communication between managers and employees that is lateral downward and upward communication. Communication enables organizing by coordinating human activities, facilitating task accomplishments, network sharing,

control and management.

Let us try and understand what it means to be good at communication within your workplace. In the next slide, we have a video which illustrates the differences in workplace communication with a practical example.



Think about it. Let's say we're deciding between two real estate agents to help us buy our first home.

Since they make a commission off the transaction, we're kind of hiring them for a job. The first person says, I'm really good at communication. The second one says, I am reachable via text message all the time and I respond within a half hour. I use a questionnaire that I worked through with you to make sure I'm helping you find every house that fits your goals. I use a database online to help you keep track of the homes you've considered and anything we've learned together about them.


One person is making a general claim and they might have a different definition of good at communication than we do. The other is making some specific claims that we could hold them to. Specific communication skills should inspire a lot more confidence. The example above illustrates that effective communication extends beyond mere verbal expression. It encompasses elements such as responsiveness, employing suitable channels to pinpoint client feedback and needs.

All align with the overarching objective of achieving desired outcomes. Communication therefore not only creates a context for organizing, but also serves as a means by which it is achieved and also is influenced by the process of organizing as

individuals experience and make sense of their roles. Within organizations, communication plays a crucial role in guiding relationships both horizontally and vertically and shapes responses to different official initiatives.

## Online Communication in Workplace

- Online communication has become essential and fundamental to how work is conducted in modern professional environments.
- **Virtual teams** consisting of geographically dispersed members collaborating on projects have gained momentum in recent years due to advancements in technology, globalization, and the need for flexible work arrangements.
- Online communication tools and platforms enable real-time or asynchronous interaction, ensuring that work can progress smoothly and efficiently without significant delays.



Source:  
<https://youtu.be/IMxDeACOWCE?feature=shared>

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Online communication is now essential and fundamental to how work is conducted in modern professional environments. Virtual teams consisting of geographically dispersed members collaborating on projects have gained momentum in recent years due to advancements in technology and globalization.

And also there is a growing need for flexible work arrangements. Online communication tools and platforms enable real time or asynchronous interaction ensuring that work can progress smoothly and efficiently without significant delays. A synchronous communication is transmission of data generally without the use of an external clock signal where data can be transmitted intermittently rather than in a steady stream. For example, we can look at the way emails are exchanged and bulletin board systems work in the context of modern workplaces. Traditionally, infrastructure was associated only with physical arrangements and elements.


For example, office buildings, utilities, Xerox machines and transportation, et cetera. In online workplaces, the focus has now shifted to digital infrastructure including high speed internet, cloud servers and cyber security measures.

- Digital solutions (email, instant messaging, video conferencing, and project management tools), provide avenues for exchanging ideas and fostering teamwork.
- Also offers benefits such as flexibility, time efficiency, and cost savings; by eliminating the need for physical meetings and reducing travel expenses.
  - Online surveys and feedback forms collect input from employees, enabling organizations to make informed decisions and address concerns.
- Performance indicators and metrics for remote work help assess productivity and employee engagement.
  - When managed effectively, online workplaces lead to improved productivity, increased talent pool access, and resilience in the face of unexpected challenges.



Therefore, we can understand that digital solutions provide avenues for exchanging ideas and fostering team works. Whether this communication is using the email, instant messaging, video conferencing and several other project management tools. Also digital modes of communication in modern workplace offer benefits such as flexibility, time efficiency and cost saving by eliminating the need for physical meetings and reducing travel expenses.



Online surveys and feedback forms collect input from employees enabling organizations to make informed decisions and address concerns without holding various physical meetings. Performance indicators and metrics for remote work help assess productivity and employee engagement. When managed effectively, online workplaces lead to improved productivity, increased talent pool access and resilience in the face of unexpected challenges. There are several apps which are available for online group communication offering a range of features and functionalities. In addition to popular apps like Telegram, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet and Zoom, let us also explore some other options for online collaboration in the workplace.



Source: <https://slack.com/en/faq-in/help/articles/390046307894-updates-to-slack-desktop-app>

Source: [www.orbit.love.com](http://www.orbit.love.com)

- **Slack** is a widely used team communication platform that offers real-time messaging, file sharing, and integration with various third-party apps. It provides channels for different topics or teams, private messaging, and voice/video calls.

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/616249444090400000-discord-logos-on-discord-discovers-the-gifs-72591440244343134/>

- Originally designed for gamers, **Discord** has evolved into a versatile communication platform for communities and groups.
  - It offers text channels, voice channels, video calls, and screen sharing, supporting integration with other apps.

We can refer to Slack and Discord. Slack is a widely used team communication platform that offers real time messaging, file sharing and integration with various third party apps. It also provides channels for different topics or teams, private messaging and voice as well as video calls. Discord was originally designed for gamers but has evolved into a versatile communication platform for communities and groups. Offering text channels, voice channels, video calls and screen sharing and supporting integration with other apps also.

• Other well-known project management and team collaboration tools are **Trello** and **Basecamp**. They offer features for group communication, task management, document sharing, and scheduling.

- Basecamp has a simple, intuitive interface and flat-rate pricing model. It is popular among teams who want straightforward project management solutions.
- Trello has a customizable, card-based system. It allows for a visual representation of tasks and workflows. It is more popular amongst teams who prefer flexibility in project management.

Source: <https://www.selecthub.com/project-management-software/trello-vs-basecamp/>

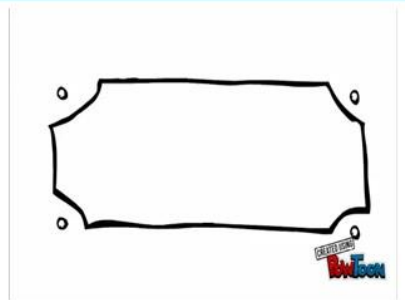
Other well known project management and team collaboration tools are Trello and Basecamp. They offer features for group communication, task management, document sharing and scheduling. Basecamp has a simple intuitive interface and flat rate pricing model. It is popular among teams who want a straightforward project management solutions. Trello, if we try to draw a basic comparison, also has a customizable and card based system.

It allows for a visual representation of tasks and workflows and it is more popular among teams who prefer flexibility in project management. The figure on the left hand side of the slide illustrates it in the form of a graph. I have referred to only a few examples. Other options are also there. The choice of the app depends on the specific needs of the group and also the preferences which the group as well as the workplace environment may have.

It is recommended to explore the features, pricing and user reviews of each app to determine which one best suits your needs. Let us now look at some other pertinent aspects of workplace communication such as verbal, non-verbal and cross cultural communication within the context of the digital era.

Verbal Communication : Allows for immediate feedback and clarification, and is effective in conveying emotions and tone.

- Today, VoIP technology, including services like Skype and VoIP-enabled phone systems, allow for cost-effective and high-quality voice communication over the Internet.
- Presentations and webinars are often delivered virtually, combining verbal communication with visual aids and interactive features to engage audiences.
- Smart voice assistants like Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant are used for quick voice commands and information retrieval, streamlining tasks, and providing hands-free communication.



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6g0lye0MAU>



Verbal communication allows for immediate feedback and clarification and is effective in conveying emotions and tones through paralanguage. Today, VoIP technology including services like Skype and VoIP enabled phone systems allow for cost effective and high quality voice communication over the internet. Presentations and webinars are often delivered virtually combining verbal communication with visual aids and interactive features to engage audiences.

Smart voice assistants like Siri, Alexa and Google Assistant are used for quick voice commands and information retrieval, streamlining tasks and providing hands free communication. A common perception is that the digital age does not allow us to fully utilize non-verbal communication. However, there are several non-verbal cues which can be effectively used in digital communication also in written as well as oral digital communication.

## Non - Verbal Communication on Digital Platforms

- Non-verbal communication in the workplace involves the transmission of messages, feelings, and information through non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, background management, focus of lights, accessories etc.
- In virtual meetings, individuals must be aware of their on-screen presence, including their positioning and the background visible to others.
- In collaborative online meetings, participants can use screen sharing and annotation tools to highlight points and provide non-verbal visual cues.
- Leveraging video conferencing, using emoticons or emojis in comments, and utilizing clear and descriptive language also compensate for the absence of nonverbal cues.



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J85m2B8tU>



Swajati

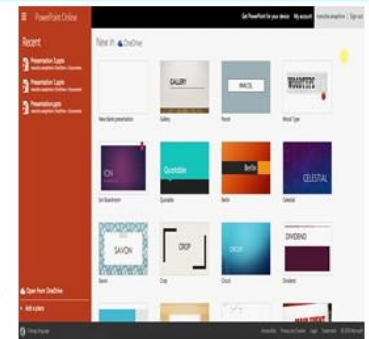


Non-verbal communication in the workplace involves the transmission of messages, feelings and information through non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, background management, focus of lights, accessories, etcetera. In virtual meetings, individuals must be aware of their online presence including their positioning in the background which is visible to the others.

In collaborative online meetings, participants can use screen sharing and annotation tools to highlight points and provide non-verbal visual cues. Leveraging video conferencing using emoticons or emojis in comments and utilizing clear and descriptive language also compensate for the absence of non-verbal cues. A significant way to replace body language is through the visuals we use in our presentations. We can use different ways for it. While choosing the online presentation tools, we should evaluate their audio-video capability, cloud access and storage import and export feature and also of course, the ease of use among other things.



- A significant way to replace body language is through the visuals we use in our presentation.
  - These could be
    - PowerPoint slides, Google Slides, Keynote, Prezi Basic, Zoho Show, FlowVella, LibreOffice Impress, Ludud, PowerToon, Speaker Deck, Visme, WPS presentation, authorStream, Genially, Canva, insertion of videos, interactive polls, or more...
- Backgrounds take on a greater importance in virtual presentations than they do in real life. They set the scene and give the audience non-verbal cues about you.
- If you have a choice, try to have a background that is:
  - Uncluttered, Plain or with features that reinforce the image you want to project.
    - Zoom, Microsoft Teams, for eg., have virtual background functions already integrated, making it easy to swap your clutter for a professional background. Google meet allows you to blur the background.



Source: <https://athos3.com/how-to-format-the-background-of-your-slides-in-powerpoint-online/>

We can try to replace body language through the visuals with the help of PowerPoint slides, Google slides, Keynote, Prezi Basic, Zoho Show, etcetera, etcetera and you would find that a rough list is presented here. But we find that there are innovative and continuously newer ways to incorporate substitutes for body language in online presentations. Backgrounds take on a greater importance in virtual presentations than they do in real life. They set the scene and give the audience non-verbal cues about you and your relationship with the event as the background becomes a context even though you might not be aware of it. If you have a choice, try to have a background that is uncluttered, plain or with features that reinforce the image you want to project.

While we work from home, we can also utilize the different options which certain apps provide to us. For example, Zoom and Microsoft Teams have virtual background functions already integrated, making it easy to swap your clutter for a professional background. Google Meet also allows you to blur the background. One of the most powerful communication tools is human face and remains so in offline as well as online communication. We communicate as well as interpret facial expressions of each other without any formal training.

And people tend to believe the looks on one's face rather than what they are being told with the help of words only.

- Human face is one of the most powerful communication tools in on/off-line ways. We interpret and communicate facial expressions without any formal training.
- People tend to believe the looks on one's face rather than what they are being told.
- Confidence, confusion, friendliness etc. through smiles, frowns and eyes which help us to determine the congeniality and trust, even deciding the level of intelligence in a person.
- Involuntary as well as voluntary.
  - Involuntary – instinctive, illustrators, universal expressions are from this category.
  - Voluntary – socially conditioned, affective displays, are a part of learnt behavior and have more cultural variation.



So we can see that the confidence, confusion, friendliness, etc. are conveyed through smiles, frowns and eyes which help us to determine the congeniality and trust, even deciding the level of intelligence in a person. Our facial expressions may be voluntary as well as involuntary. They are involuntary as many of them are instinctive.

They are illustrators, sometimes almost universal expressions. They are voluntary also in as much as they are socially coordinated. If we are using affective displays to fake an emotion and voluntary non-verbal expressions are also a part of learnt behavior and therefore they have more cultural variations. Macro and micro expressions should also be understood in this context as they speak a lot not only about us as an individual, but also about our command over the topic, the relationship which we have with the content which we are trying to share with the others and the relationship which we want to establish with the audience even though they might be faceless to us while we are sitting only in front of the screen. My NPTEL SWAM course on body language studies these aspects in detail.

I would also point out that in online communication whenever the face is visible, the eyes and mouth need special attention.

Source: <https://www.psychmechanics.com/co/vering-eyes-ears-and-mouth/>

- Eye contact is an integral/ hard-wired part of human interaction. Controlling a person's gaze results in better retention.
- Try not to look at the faces on screen, or at your own face. Looking directly into the camera is something that far too many speakers forget to do. This is quite possibly because they're not sure where it is.
- Mouth plays a major role in communication of emotions, supported by teeth and tongue. Even the routine activities for which our mouth is used – speaking and talking - communicate a lot about the person. Smiles and their absence. Laughter
- Mouth conveys evaluation gestures. They are important markers during any dialogue.
- Before the decision is made and verbalized, they give us a window to negotiate.
- Avoid covering the mouth.

Eye contact is an integral part of human interaction. In fact, it is hard wired into us and controlling a person's gaze results in better retention and therefore often we say that we should try to look into the eyes of the speaker and that we listen to a person not only with our ears, but also with our eyes. It is easier in offline communication, but how do we manage a direct eye contact in online communication? It is important that in online communication we do not look at faces on the screen or we are not tempted to look at our own face. Looking directly into the camera provides the impression that you are looking into the eyes of the audience.

So, we have to be aware about the position of the camera. Is it somewhere in the side? Is it on the top of the screen? Is it towards the bottom of the screen? Whatever the location of this camera on the screen is that would give you the clue that looking at the camera only would provide the impression of direct and therefore a confident interaction. Mouth also plays a major role in communication of emotions. It is supported by our teeth and tongue and even the routine activities for which our mouth is used for example, speaking and talking communicate a lot about the person. We can also talk about the different types of smiles as well as the absence of a smile on a face.

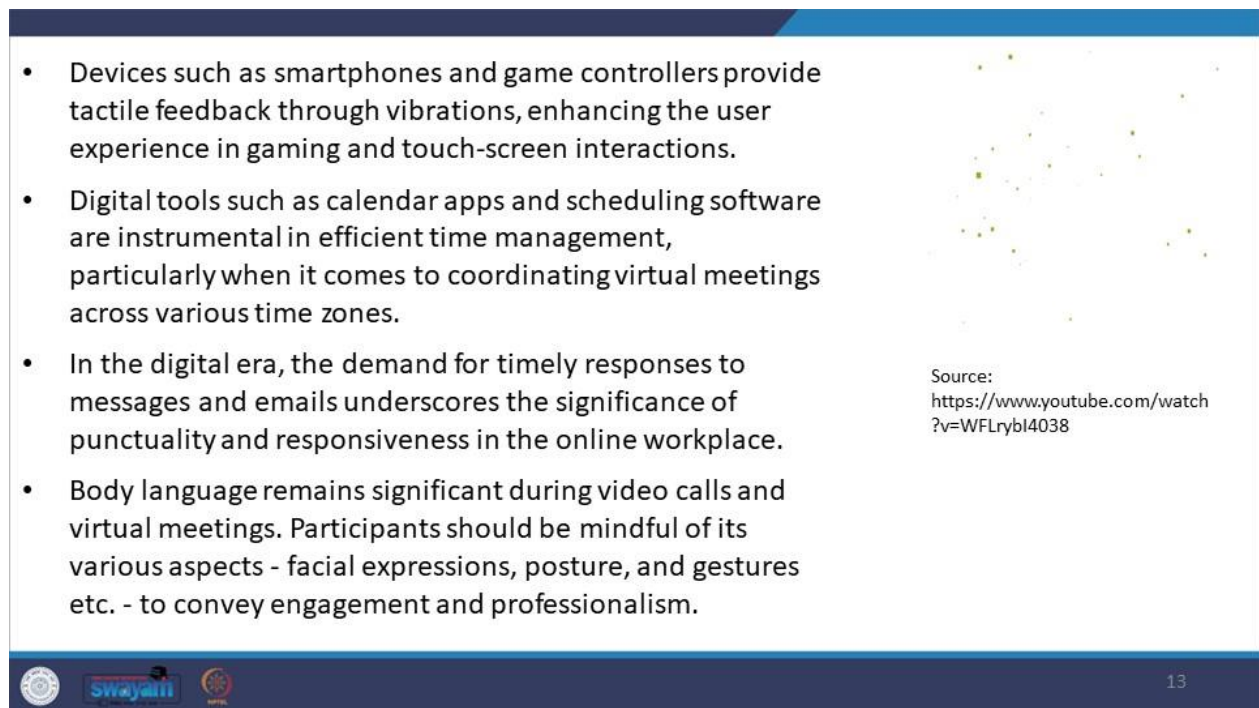
A professional or particularly a friendly smile which also reaches your eyes helps you in coming across as a friendly and open person. Absence of a smile would make you rather rigid looking. As the pictures on the left hand side of the slide illustrate, mouth also conveys evaluation gestures and they are important during any dialogue particularly at the workplace. Before the decision is made and verbalized conveyed to you in an



audible manner, these hand gestures and these gazes shifts also give us a window to negotiate if we are able to interpret it correctly. The normal advice is that in any position of interaction where face is visible, we should avoid covering any portion of our mouth, any eyes, any evaluatory gesture so that we come across as an open communicator.

Smile particularly has to be viewed as a multipurpose expression. It is considered to be the universal smile of happiness, but now we find that people also use as a mask. People smile when they are happy, but we also learn to pass on social smiles without feeling actually happy as part of general societal behavior and interaction. So a smile in the professional world does not necessarily indicate a specific emotional state, but nonetheless it suggests a friendly and open personality which is willing to continue with the dialogue. Smiles also carry different connotations and also have cultural associations which govern demonstrations or suppressions also occasions.

For example, in Japan a smile can also indicate concealment of embarrassment and therefore in online workplaces the cultural interpretations of a particular body linguistic sign becomes important for us to understand. Other aspects of NVCs which are pertinent in digital forms of communication are haptics that is the language of touch and chronemics that is the language of time. Their applications have evolved with advancements in technology. Understanding and adapting to these changes in non-verbal communication aspects are important for effective communication and interaction in today's digital landscape.



- Devices such as smartphones and game controllers provide tactile feedback through vibrations, enhancing the user experience in gaming and touch-screen interactions.
- Digital tools such as calendar apps and scheduling software are instrumental in efficient time management, particularly when it comes to coordinating virtual meetings across various time zones.
- In the digital era, the demand for timely responses to messages and emails underscores the significance of punctuality and responsiveness in the online workplace.
- Body language remains significant during video calls and virtual meetings. Participants should be mindful of its various aspects - facial expressions, posture, and gestures etc. - to convey engagement and professionalism.

Source:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFLrybl4038>

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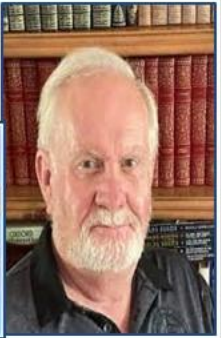

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We should also try to adjust different aspects of communication as needed to establish a shared understanding and connection with others. The communication accommodation theory suggests that successful communication is not a one size fits all approach, but rather a dynamic process that involves adapting to the unique dynamics of each interaction.

- **Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)**, first proposed by Howard Giles, an American social psychologist, in 1971, is a framework that explains how individuals adjust their speech style when interacting with others.
  - It emphasizes the importance of positive interpersonal communication and the creation of shared meaning within a context.
  - Successful communication, according to CAT, depends on the ability of each party to adapt to verbal and nonverbal cues, the situation, and practical strategies such as team building and emotional expression.
  - This theory provides insights into micro and macro levels of interpersonal and intergroup interactions, including perception, behavior, and context.



Source: <http://www.oow.upi.ac.id/files/Slide-COM202-COM202-Slide-14-Sri-Wijayanti.pdf>

Howard Giles  
Source: [www.comm.ucsb.edu](http://www.comm.ucsb.edu)

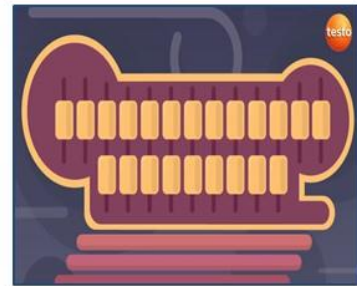
Communication accommodation theory or CAT was first proposed by Howard Giles, an American social psychologist in 1971. It is a framework that explains how individuals adjust their speech style while interacting with others. It emphasizes the importance of positive interpersonal communication and the creation of shared meaning within a context.

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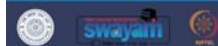
to adapt to verbal as well as non-verbal cues, the situation and practical strategies such as team building and emotional expressions. This theory also provides insights into micro and macro levels of interpersonal and intergroup interactions including perception, behavior and context. We have seen that the pandemic served as a catalyst for the widespread adoption of online communication tools and platforms. With physical office spaces inaccessible, teams had to find alternative ways to collaborate online to find collaboration tools, project management platforms and cloud based document sharing and these aspects became vital for maintaining productivity and ensuring a seamless teamwork.

### Cross-Cultural Communication

- Cross-cultural communication refers to the exchange of information, ideas, and messages between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds.
  - Diversity in cross-cultural communication is not just important; it is essential for fostering understanding, inclusivity, innovation, and effective collaboration in a multicultural and interconnected world.
  - Cultural awareness enhances relationships, decision-making processes, financial performance, staff management, marketing strategies, and meeting diverse customer needs.
  - It involves navigating and understanding the cultural differences, norms, values, and communication styles that exist across diverse cultures.



Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mg\\_YlqqpIB4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mg_YlqqpIB4)

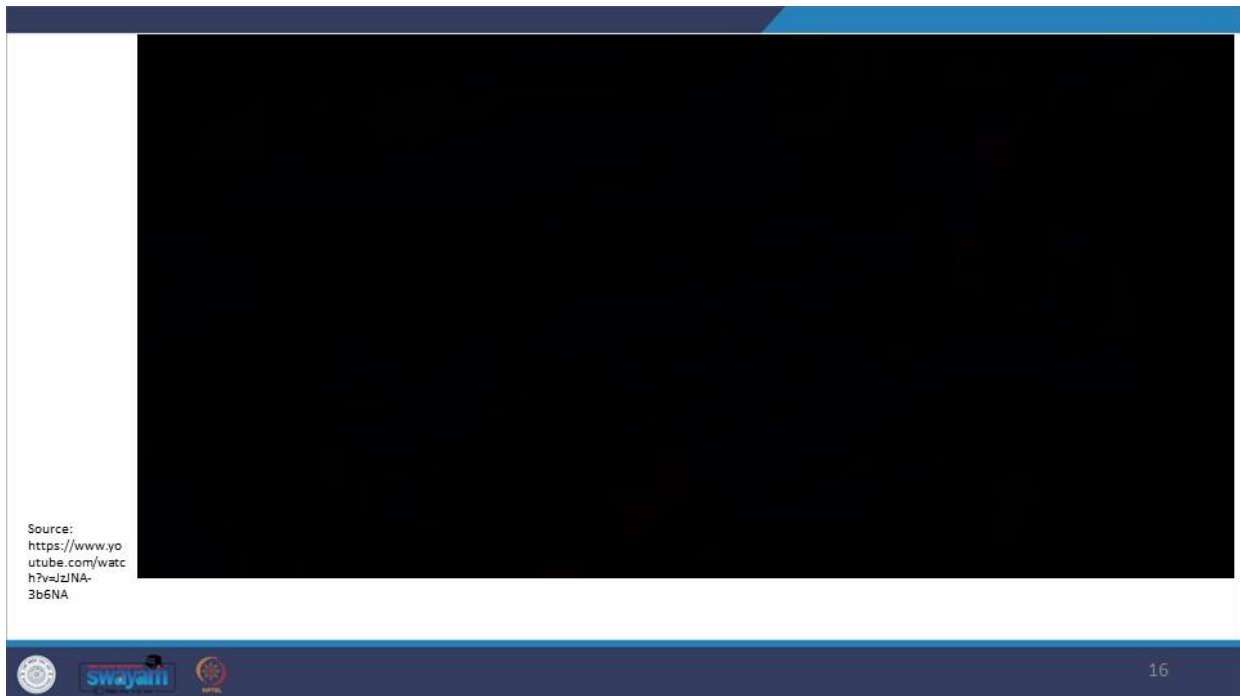


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Cross cultural communication is important in online workplace.

It refers to the exchange of information, ideas and messages between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds. Diversity in cross cultural communication is not only important rather it is essential for fostering understanding, inclusivity, innovation and effective collaboration in a multicultural and interconnected world. Cultural awareness enhances relationships, decision making processes, financial performance, staff management, marketing strategies and meeting diverse customer needs. It involves navigating and understanding the cultural differences, norms, values and communication styles that exist across diverse cultures.

We shall look at a video now. It is by Helena Mersch-dorf, a social scientist. She delves into the intricacies of cross cultural communication elucidating how these dynamics are encoded and interpreted within the context of cultural perceptions in the global marketplace.



Language allows us to encode and decode meaning. But to crack the code we need a shared set of pre-existing concepts. Now many of these concepts are passed down to us from our culture and ultimately shape our world view.

And the lack of a shared world view is what makes intercultural communication so difficult. Let me illustrate what I mean. Here we have person A and person B. Their world views have each been shaped by their cultural influences on a broad societal level and by their personal lived experiences on an individual level. And together these things give them each a distinct lens through which they view life and through which they filter their communication.

So when person A communicates they encode their message into verbal and nonverbal signals which are then sent to person B and filtered through the lens of person B where they're recoded to reconstruct the message. But because of the filtering process the message that arrives can be highly distorted and as this process goes back and forth the likelihood of invisible misunderstandings mounts. And I call them invisible because in many cases one or both communication partners are unaware that it's even happening. Like in the following example. An American company selling high-end tech products was looking to break into the Chinese market.

Talks and negotiations had been going well with a potential buyer and the Americans considered it a done deal. To celebrate they invited the Chinese delegation out for dinner at a fine local restaurant. Now as the Chinese delegation arrived the head of the delegation was greeted by a junior member of the US team. The Chinese delegate asked

the American where he should sit to which he was told sit where you like. Now the next day the Chinese delegation left the US without signing the contract and days later the American team received word that the Chinese had felt humiliated and were reconsidering the business relationship.

Globalization has led to a re-evaluation of how diversity is approached considering its significant impact on societies, organizations and interactions between cultures and nations worldwide. However, culture deeply affects communication sometimes in subtle yet profound ways influencing trust, moral flexibility, leadership and communication competence.

## Online Workspaces as Groups

- Group communication primarily focuses on ensuring member engagement and progress toward goals through activities like briefing sessions, setting agendas, and sharing updates.
- Online groups can exist within an online workplace or outside of it, and their purpose may extend beyond work-related activities.
  - They can be formed for various purposes, such as professional networking, interest-based communities, support groups, or academic collaborations.
  - They are often platform-specific and dependent on the platform to establish norms and standards of communication.



Source: <https://youtu.be/NciV3gPQmAw?feature=shared>

Group communication primarily focuses on ensuring member engagement and progress towards goals through activities like briefing sessions, setting agendas and sharing updates. Online groups can exist within an online workplace or outside of it and their purpose may extend beyond work related activities. They can be formed for various purposes such as professional networking, interest based communities, support groups or academic collaborations.

They are often platform specific and dependent on the platform to establish norms and standards of communication. WhatsApp groups are a prominent examples of online groups for communication and collaboration. Its theme and description provide information about the group's purpose, topic or focus. Group administrators have additional privileges to manage the group settings and members can also leave the group imparting individuals control over their level of engagement. Microsoft Teams on the




other hand is a comprehensive collaboration tool that integrates with other Microsoft Office apps.

It enables chat based communication, video conferencing, file sharing, task management and integration with other productivity tools. Similarly, each platform dictates the dynamics of the group and standards of behavior and collaboration expected from the members. Let us now look at some of the challenges as experienced within online workplace communities.

## Mitigating Challenges in Virtual Groups


- Liane Davey, a well-known consultant for enhancing productivity in teams, addresses the multiple challenges posed by the virtual nature of workplaces in addressing conflicts.
  - In virtual teams, building relationships and recognizing potential issues can be challenging without casual interactions.
  - Uncomfortable discussions often take place over video conferencing or email, which are not ideal for conflict resolution.
  - Procrastination is easier in virtual teams, as there are no daily encounters to prompt resolution. Delayed conflict can escalate into a bigger problem.



The infographic 'The Impact of Conflict on Today's Workplace' provides the following data:

- #1: The sentiment around workplace conflict is almost exclusively negative. What's the first word that comes to mind when you think of conflict? Frustrations, Drama, Petty, berberulent, Gossip, Arguments, Fights, Silos. 90% of the responses were negative.
- #2: Conflict presents a drag on workplace efficiency. 70% of manager-level and above said conflict negatively impacts the efficiency in their department. 3.2 hours/week spent dealing with conflict for manager-level respondents and above.
- #3: Conflict takes employees' future. 40% said they have left a job (%) in the past because of unhealthy conflict. 59% said their job satisfaction would improve if their company leaders conflict more effectively.

Source: <https://www.governanceinstitute.com/works/hspx/Conflict-management-training>



Source: [www.teamly.com](http://www.teamly.com)

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I would refer to Liane Devey, a well known consultant for enhancing productivity in teams who addresses multiple challenges posed by the virtual nature of workplaces in addressing conflicts. In virtual teams, building relationships and recognizing potential issues can be challenging without casual interactions.

Uncomfortable discussions may take place over video conferencing or through emails which are not ideal for conflict resolution. Procrastination is easier in virtual teams as there are no daily encounters to prompt resolution. Delayed conflict can escalate into a bigger problem. Conflicts may lead to stress, frustrations, reduced efficiency and also low job satisfaction leading sometimes to retention issues within the organization.

However, conflicts can also be beneficial for change. Positive and transparent communication and respectful feedback exchange increase the likelihood of constructive conflict resolution. At this point, we would discuss some other major concerns in the context of digital communication and they are groupthink, homophily and social loafing.

- Groupthink

- Groupthink is a phenomenon that occurs within a group or team when the desire for harmony and conformity outweighs critical thinking and independent evaluation of ideas.
- It leads to a situation where group members prioritize agreement and consensus over the thorough examination of alternatives and potential risks.
- Group members develop an overly optimistic view of their group's abilities and become excessively confident in their decisions.
- As a result, the group may make poor decisions or overlook potential flaws in their chosen course of action.



Source:  
www.corporatefinanceinstitute.com

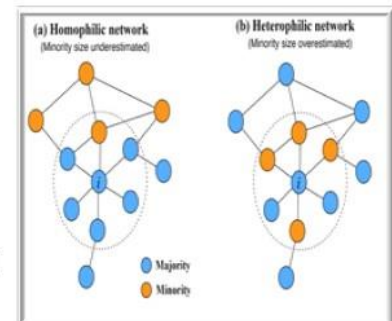


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Groupthink is a phenomenon that occurs within a group or team when the desire for harmony and conformity overweighs critical thinking and independent evaluation of idea. As a result of it, the group may make poor decisions and sometimes may even overlook potential flaws in their chosen course of action. Because of groupthink, it develops an unquestioning belief in its own righteousness leading to a close mindedness.

- Homophily

- Homophily refers to the tendency for individuals to associate with others who are similar to themselves, leading to a lack of diverse perspectives and potential innovation.
- Homophilous connections may limit exposure to diverse perspectives, resulting in less inclusive conversations and a lack of representation for marginalized groups.
- Homophily can lead to the formation of subcommunities within larger online networks.
- Understanding subcommunities within homophily can provide insights into the social dynamics and patterns of interaction within a network.



Source: www.github.com

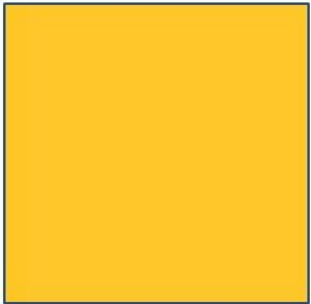


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

Homophily refers to the unfortunate tendency to associate with others who are similar to ourselves, leading to a lack of diverse perspectives and potential innovation. So,

understanding sub communities within homophily can provide insights into the social dynamics and pattern of interactions within a network. But it definitely leads to certain biases which kill a positive work culture even in online communities. Online networks and algorithmic influence allow individuals to self-select their connections and curate their online presence. Homophily may limit exposure to diverse perspectives and result in echo chambers or filter bubbles, concepts which we have taken in certain other modules also.

- Social Loafing
  - Social loafing refers to the phenomenon where individuals exert less effort or contribution when working in a group compared to when they work individually.
  - In group settings, individuals may feel a decreased sense of personal accountability or responsibility for the outcome of the task.
  - They may believe that their individual contributions will be diluted or less noticeable among the efforts of others, leading to a decrease in their own effort.
  - Individuals may also experience evaluation apprehension in group settings, worrying about how their performance will be judged or evaluated by others.



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzsVh8YwZEQ>

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Social loafing refers to the phenomenon where individuals exert less effort or contribution when working in a group compared to when they work individually. In group setting sometimes an individual may feel a decreased sense of personal accountability or responsibility for the proper outcome of the task. Individuals may also experience evaluation, apprehension in group settings worrying about how their performance will be judged or evaluated by others. Social loafing can result in some individuals taking advantage of the collective effort of others without contributing their fair share. And these challenges require leaders and team members to be more mindful of their communication, actively listen to understand different perspectives and make intentional efforts to foster positive relationships within the virtual setting.

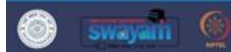
Open and transparent communication in the digital era along with the use of video conferences or other virtual platforms can help mitigate some of these difficulties and enable successful conflict resolution and a smooth transaction.

## Digital Etiquette in Workplace

- Digital etiquette refers to the guidelines and principles of polite and respectful behavior when interacting with others in digital or online environments.
- It is crucial in online workplaces to maintain professionalism, effective communication, and positive working relationships.
  - Do not misrepresent yourself or provide false information and be transparent about conflicts of interest or biases that may impact your work or decisions.
  - Minimize your digital volume and think wisely before communicating. Don't bombard your team with messages and unnecessary check-ins.



Source: [www.bookkeepers.com](http://www.bookkeepers.com)



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And therefore, we find that in the workplace digital etiquettes become very important. Digital etiquettes refer to the guidelines and principles of polite and respectful behavior when interacting with others in digital environment. And digital etiquette is crucial to maintain professionalism to have effective communication and positive working relationships. And they involve not to pass on false information, to be transparent about our communication, about the authenticity of what we say.

Also minimize our digital volume and think wisely before committing ourselves in any way. It is a personal quality which encompasses respect and kindness in online interactions.

- If you are communicating with someone in a different *time zone* or outside of regular working hours, be considerate of their availability.
- Foster a respectful and inclusive online environment by avoiding any form of *harassment*, bullying, or discrimination.
- Promote *critical thinking* by encouraging individuals to question assumptions, challenge prevailing opinions, and engage in independent analysis.
- Be vigilant about *cybersecurity* risks, such as phishing attempts, malware, and hacking, and report any suspicious activities or incidents promptly to relevant authorities.
- Sticking to consistent rules, rituals, and protocols, supported by team-building exercises, can help strengthen collaboration between team members.



Source: Powerpoint



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Digital communication in modern workplaces has come up with their own challenges which were unforeseen earlier. For example, working at the same time with people who are living in different time zones or when we have to interact with people outside the regular working hours. So, digital etiquette requires that we have to be sure of their availability and foster a respectful and inclusive online environment which does not convey any form of harassment.

At the same time, we should be very aware of the cyber security risks such as phishing attempts, malware and hacking and report all suspicious activities or incidents promptly to relevant authorities. We should also be aware of the net neutrality legal frameworks which may exist differently in different countries and societies. So, we should be aware of the legal framework within which a person is working but might be located in a different geographical region. Thus, we can say that effective online communication requires adaptation, flexibility and empathy.

## Conclusion

- Effective workplace communication is not just a skill; it's a fundamental pillar of a thriving and dynamic workplace.
  - It is an investment in the well-being of employees, the success of projects, and the sustainability of organizations.
- Whether it's verbal or written communication, active listening, nonverbal cues, or digital exchanges; mastering the art of communication is essential for both individual and organizational growth.
  - By cultivating these skills and promoting a culture of open and honest communication, organizations can reduce misunderstandings, conflicts, and inefficiencies, leading to improved teamwork and overall performance.



Source: Powerpoint



It is not just a skill but it is a fundamental pillar of a thriving and dynamic workplace.

Whether it is verbal or non-verbal communication, active listening, a sensitivity to non-verbal cues and digital exchanges, mastering the art of communication are essential for both individual and organizational growth. By cultivating these skills and promoting a culture of open and honest communications, organizations can reduce misunderstandings, conflicts and inefficiencies. The ever-evolving landscape of technology continues to reshape the way we communicate at the workplace. Staying adaptable to these changes is key to staying competitive in today's fast-paced global market. In the next module, we shall examine how to tailor our online communication to the needs of specific audience groups. Thank you.