Lecture 10
The Seven C’s of Effective Communication III

❖ Clarity
Getting the meaning from your head accurately to the reader is the purpose of clarity.

Remember
• Choose precise, concrete and familiar words
• Construct effective sentences and paragraphs

Choose Precise, Concrete and Familiar words
• Clarity is achieved through a balance between precise language and familiar language
• When you have the choice between a long word and a short word, choose the short familiar word

Golden Rule
• When in doubt, use the more familiar words; audience will understand them better.
• For example
  you must use pay instead of remuneration and invoice instead of statement of payment

Example
• Unfamiliar
  After our perusal of pertinent data, the conclusion is that a lucrative market exists for subject property.
• Familiar
  The data we studied show that your property is profitable and in high demand.

❖ Although it is appropriate to use technical terms and business jargon in some professional situations, avoid their use when the reader is not acquainted with the terminology.

Example
• Unfamiliar
  assessed valuation
• Familiar
  property value for tax purpose
• Unfamiliar
  charge to your principal
• Familiar
  increase the balance of your loan
Choose precise, concrete and familiar words

• With the increased use of e-mail there is the tendency to be concise.
• The danger is that you must know the meaning of e-mail acronyms which aid conciseness.
• For instance IMO means In my opinion, FAQ means frequently asked questions etc.

Construct Effective Sentences and Paragraphs
• At the core of clarity is the sentence
• Important characteristics to consider are
  - Length
  - Unity
  - Coherence
  - Emphasis

Length
• Try for an average sentence length of 17 to 20 words.
• When the sentence length increases try to chop it down to two sentences.
• Also if the sentences are too short then the resulting language becomes overly simple and choppy.

Unity
• In a sentence, unity means that you must have one main idea.
• In case of other ideas they must be closely related.
• For example ‘I like Sohail and Eiffel Tower is in Paris’ is obviously not a unified sentence.

Coherence
• In a coherent sentence the words are arranged so that the ideas clearly express the intended meaning.
• Place the correct modifier as close as possible to word it is supposed to modify.
• In the examples which follow, notice that ‘unclear’ sentence conveys the wrong meaning.

Example
• Unclear
  Being an excellent lawyer, I am sure that you can help us.
• Clear
  Being an excellent lawyer, you can surely help us.
• Unclear
  His report was about managers, broken down by age and gender.
• Clear
  His report focused on age and gender of managers.
• Unclear
  After planting 10,000 berry plants, the deer came into our botanist’s farm and crushed them.

• Clear
  After our botanists had planted 10,000 berry plants, the deer came into the farm and crushed them.

**Emphasis**
• The quality that gives force to important parts of sentences and paragraphs is emphasis.
• Most often, put main ideas up front within a sentence.
• Writers must decide what needs emphasis, and then decide the correct sentence structure.
• Little emphasis
  The airplane finally approached the speed of sound, and it became very difficult to control.

• Better emphasis
  As it approached the speed of sound, the airplane became very difficult to control.

• Little emphasis
  Candidates should be motivated and should have interest in dynamic and static testing of material, and have those prerequisites and others.

• Better emphasis
  Prerequisites in candidates should include expertise in dynamic and static testing of material.

• In addition to using the above methods of emphasis, the PCs of today allow different ways to visually add emphasis to words.
• Some of them include headings, tabulations, itemization, line charts, pie charts, italics, indentation colored capitals or even wide or short margins.

**Checklist**
• Choose as precise or as concrete a word as possible.
• Select words that have high sense of appropriateness for the reader.
• Opt for familiar words, the ones that are not pretentious.
• Limit the average sentence to 17 to 20 words.
• Insert no more than one main idea into a sentence.
• Arrange words so that the main idea occurs early in a sentence.
**True courtesy involves being aware not only of the perspectives of others, but also their feelings.**

- Knowing your audience allows you to use statements of courtesy.
- Be aware of your message receiver.
- Courtesy stems from a sincere you-attitude.
- It is not merely politeness with mechanical insertion of ‘please’ and ‘thank you’, although applying socially accepted manners is a form of courtesy.
- Rather it is politeness that grows out of respect and concern for others.

Suggestions

- Be sincerely tactful, thoughtful and appreciative.
- Use expressions that show respect.
- Chose nondiscriminatory expressions.

**Tact**

Though very few people are intentionally abrupt or blunt, these negative traits are a common cause of discourtesy.

- Sometimes they stem from a mistaken idea of conciseness, sometimes from negative personal attitudes etc.

**Example**

- **Tactless, blunt**
  - Stupid letter; I did not understand any of it.
- **More tactful**
  - It’s my understanding…..

- **Tactless, Blunt**
  - Clearly you did not read my latest fax.
- **More Tactful**
  - Sometimes my wording is not precise, let me try again.

- **Tactless, Blunt**
  - I rewrote that letter three times; the point was clear.
- **More Tactful**
  - I am sorry the point was not clear; here is another version.

**Thoughtfulness and Appreciation**

- The traits help build goodwill.
- Be generous in appreciating others’ good performances.

**Use expressions that show respect**

- No reader wants to receive message that offend.
- Such expressions are expressed in two groups
  - Omit irritating Expressions
  - Omit questionable humor
Omit irritating expressions

• Following is a consensus list, that includes a list of expressions that many people find irritating
  - contrary to your inference
  - I do not agree with you
  - if you care
  - I am sure you must realize

Omit questionable humour

• When in doubt as to the relevance of humor, leave it out.
• Laughter to one person is disgust for another; each of us has a different sense of humor.
• Notice the difference between the 2 notes in the next example.

Example

• Note 1, Offensive
  - Hey man, what's this I hear about the good news? You sure pulled a fast one this past weekend and then didn't tell any of us about it.
  Give my regards to the little lady. And wish her the best; she'll need it.

• More courteous
  - Warm congratulations on your wedding.
  Well, you certainly took us by surprise. In fact, just a few of us suspected that you were taking off to get married. But even though we didn't hear about it until later, we wish you the best.
  Give our warm regards to the new partner.

Choose Nondiscriminatory Expressions

• Sexists terms
• Singular pronouns
• Names

Sexists Terms

• Be careful about using the ‘man’ word
• In western cultures than in others this is a matter of more concern.
• Use alternative expressions that are neuter in nature.

Example

• Questionable
  - freshman
• More Desirable
  - entering students; first year students

Singular pronouns

• English lacks a neutral pronoun signifying ‘he’ or ‘she’
• The trend to follow should be to avoid using ‘he’, ‘his’ or ‘him’ etc.
Example

Questionable  
Anyone who comes to class late will get his grade reduced.

More desirable  
Students who come to class late will get their grade reduced.

• Questionable  
- Each customer will have the new changes noted on his bill.
• More desirable  
- Customers will have the new changes noted on their bills.

• Questionable  
- Our criteria are firm; he is to be a scholar; he is to be a good teacher.
• More Desirable  
- Our criteria suggest that he or she should be a good scholar and a good teacher.

• Questionable  
- You guys should all be concerned about the issue.
• More Desirable  
- Both men and women, all of you should be concerned about the issue.

• Questionable  
- The executives may benefit from the stock options. He will ….
• More Desirable  
- The executives may benefit from the stock options. Each executive may ….

• Questionable  
- Each manager has a assigned parking space. He should park his car ….
• More Desirable  
- Each manager has been assigned a parking space. Each car should be parked in …

Names

• When using names, treat each gender with respect.
• Use names in parallel form.

Example

• Undesirable  
  Mudassir Ali and Sonia  
  Mrs. Ali and Mudassir

• More desirable  
  Mudassir and Sonia Ali  
  Ms. Ali [she deserves this] and Mr. Ali

Checklist

• Ask yourself: Does the communication have a sincere you-attitude?
• Have someone else have a look at your statement if you have doubts about whether its tactful. Another opinion may cause you to reconsider making a statement.
• Be cautious in using humor in communication. Here too it pays to have someone else review your words.
• Be careful in using discriminatory language; this being aware of gender, race, age, color, creed or ethnic origins.

*****************************************************************************