



**BOTSWANA COLLEGE OF DISTANCE AND OPEN LEARNING**

**In collaboration with**

**ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

**Diploma in Human Resources Management**

**Diploma in Business Management**

**SUBJECT: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION**

**SUBJECT CODE: BC 101**

**SESSIONAL EXAMINATION**

**Marks – 100**

---

**Time Allowed 3 Hours**

**Instructions to candidates**

1. This examination contains four sections (A, B, C and D).
2. Answer all questions from section A, B, C and choose two questions from Section D.
3. Answer all questions in the answer book provided
4. Start a question on a new page
5. Write legibly in grammatical English.
6. Use examples where possible to support your explanations

## SECTION A

Choose one alternative that best completes the statement or that answers the question

1. Noise interferes with the communication process. . Which of the following is an example of noise.

- A. A poorly ventilated office
- B. A clear fax message
- C. A letter of complaint
- D. A reply during an interview

2. Lack of feedback is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Horizontal communication
- B. Cross cultural communication
- C. One-way communication
- D. Organizational communication

3. Writing in your diary can be referred to as \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Mass communication
- B. Interpersonal communication
- C. Extra communication
- D. Intrapersonal communication

4. One of the factors that contribute to perceptual barriers is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Distance
- B. Culture
- C. Space
- D. Structure

5. Which of the following is not an advantage of oral communication?
- A. It offers immediate feedback
  - B. It enables meaning to be negotiated
  - C. It has no written record
  - D. It helps develop personal relationships
6. "I think that everybody has to be computer literate. Don't you?" What type of interview question is this?
- A. Hypothetical
  - B. Leading
  - C. Reflective
  - D. Specific
7. For which approach to consulting are the following features?
- A. Instructive approach
  - B. Catalyst approach
  - C. Challenge approach
  - D. Prescriptive approach
8. Which of the following aspects should one examine when analysing the audience?
- A. The distance traveled by each audience member
  - B. The level of education and experience of audience members
  - C. The height of each audience member
  - D. The level of concentration of each audience member

9. The part of a speech that will probably be best remembered by your audience is likely to be the \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Body
- B. Direct speech
- C. Introduction
- D. Conclusion

10. One disadvantage of audio-visual aids during a presentation is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. They increase retention of information
- B. They give variety to a presentation
- C. They create an immediate impact
- D. They can draw attention away from the speaker

11. In which of the following are the stages of group development correctly arranged?

- A. forming, norming, storming, performing, adjourning
- B. forming, performing, storming, performing, norming
- C. Forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning
- D. Forming, adjourning, storming, performing, forming

12. Group communication has both advantages and disadvantages. One disadvantage of groups is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. There is usually an exchange of ideas, information, viewpoints and attitudes
- B. Some people may delegate all the work to others
- C. Members motivate and stimulate one another, committing themselves to the common tasks in hand
- D. Acknowledged by others gives a feeling of personal satisfaction

13. When using an overhead projector you should \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Switch the overhead projector off when you are not using it
- B. Not worry about-facing the audience because the projector will do all the work for you
- C. Remember to use it at night only
- D. Remember that it can be used when there is a power failure

14. Which of the following is true about the length of paragraphs?

- A. A paragraph cannot consist of a single sentence.
- B. A good text should have paragraphs of varying lengths.
- C. A good paragraph should have 120 words
- D. The unity of a paragraph should be destroyed in an effort to reduce its length.

15. In the communication process, which of the following would be the first step?

- A. The sender encodes the idea as a message
- B. The sender transmits the message through a channel
- C. The sender produces the message in a transmittable medium
- D. The sender has an idea

16. One characteristic of an effective team is \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Poor communication
- B. Being suspicious of one another's motives
- C. Working through conflicts that arise
- D. Focusing on personal agendas

17. What is the goal of empathetic listening during a meeting?

- A. To understand the speaker's feelings, needs and wants so that you can appreciate his or her point of view, regardless of whether you share that perspective.
- B. To understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker's message.
- C. To understand and retain the speaker's message.
- D. To understand the speaker's intentions and motives.

18. Nonverbal signals play important roles in communication. Of the following, which one is a role of nonverbal signals?

- A. They are unintentional
- B. They complement verbal language
- C. They hide the truth
- D. They often convey less to listeners than the words you speak

19. Which of the following would not be suitable to establish one's credibility in persuasive messages?

- A. Using simple language
- B. Supporting your message with facts
- C. Displaying your good intentions
- D. Taking your readers for granted

20. Feasibility reports are called for when managers \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Require a variety of decisions and actions in order to capitalize on the opportunity
- B. Needs to understand why something is not working properly and what needs to be done to fix it
- C. Need to explore the ramification of a decision they are about to make such as replacing an advertising agency.
- D. Want to justify a decision that has already been made

21. One of the problems of open-ended questions in a questionnaire is that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. The responses tend to be too long
- B. The answers are difficult to quantify or classify
- C. They do not have “yes” or “no” as the answer
- D. They attract the same opinions from the respondents

22. In a report, recommendations should \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. Be about the past
- B. Provide guidance on what course of action to take
- C. Be general statements on the issue at hand
- D. Be facts set out in a logical and coherent manner

23. Circulars and memoranda are commonly used in organisations. One of the differences between the two is that \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. A memo has no salutation and a circular has
- B. Both have no inside addresses
- C. A memorandum shows a date and a circular does not
- D. A memo can be sent to other organisations but a circular cannot.

24. Which of the following sentences does not show any bias?

A. My African- American assistant speaks more articulately than I do.

B. Mary Kingston, 55, has just joined our trust department.

C. Workers with physical disabilities face many barriers on the job.

D. An epileptic Tracy has no problems in doing her job.

25. What is an impromptu speech?

A. It is a memorised speech

B. It is a speech that is prepared and read

C. It is an unprepared and unrehearsed speech

D. It is making a presentation with the help of an outline.

## SECTION B

State whether each of the following statements is true or false.

1. A sender-orientated letter is one in which the emphasis is on the matters of interest to the sender rather than on matters of interest to the audience.
2. Making use of tables can help present lots of numerical information in a small space of time and in an orderly manner that can make reading much easier to the receiver.
3. During a negotiation, differences should first be resolved before the negotiation process can proceed.
4. Pauses do not communicate anything, so one should avoid pausing when talking on the phone.
5. When writing a précis, one is expected to reduce a given passage to a certain number of words.
6. The content of any business text can be evaluated in terms of brevity, clarity and emphasis.
7. When responding to a complaint letter, do not express disbelief in the Complaint letter – this implies that the customer is lying.
8. One advantage of projectors is that they can be used in large auditoriums without loss of quality
9. When using a flip chart for a presentation, one should keep each sheet simple and not clutter the page with too much information
10. The time and date do not need to be recorded when a telephone message is taken down. It is the message that is all-important.

SECTION C

15 marks

1. (a) Clarify the importance of nonverbal communication (2)  
(b) Briefly describe six categories of nonverbal expressions. (3)
2. (a) describe the importance of analyzing your audience for a presentation. (2)  
(b) Identify six factors you should consider when developing an audience profile.  
(3)
3. List five principles of graphic design that can improve the quality of your visuals.  
(5)

## SECTION D

Choose two questions from this section; each question carries 25 marks

Read the following two case studies and answer the questions that follow.

### Question 1

The project manager of a construction company, wanted to make sure that nothing went wrong on the company's new project. It had just signed its biggest contract to erect a 30,000 sq. ft. warehouse for a large import - export firm.

The project manager, called together his site foremen and crew bosses. "This is one job where we can't afford any mistakes", he said. "We were the lowest bidder. Our costs will be very tight, and there is no room for error in what we do. I want every job to start on time and to finish on time. I don't want to see any crews loafing on the job. I want all equipment fully utilized!"

The manager looked at his foremen and crew bosses. "Is that clear?" he asked. The foremen and crew bosses nodded. "Ok", he said, "I know I can depend upon you all to get the job done within our contract specifications".

The job did get started on time and it finished on time. The import-export firm was pleased with its new warehouse. The crews were proud of what they had accomplished. However, the construction company president was very displeased. When all the costs were finally accounted for he discovered, to his dismay, that they exceeded the contract price by P385, 000. The construction company would have to take a loss on this job.

The president called the project manager into his office. "How did you let the costs on the warehouse job get so far out of control?" he said. "We stand to lose a great amount of money on this contract. Your crews worked overtime nearly every day at time-and-half rate of pay. In so doing, they burned out equipment so that our equipment leasing costs were excessive. What happened?"

"I don't really know", said the project manager. "I told our foremen and crew bosses as plainly as I could that this job had to be done within a tight cost budget. They should

have known that this meant no over-time, and that they should keep our equipment leasing costs in line”.

When the construction company president called the crew bosses into his office to query them, they told a different story. “Our understanding”, they said, “Was that we were to get that job finished on time and done right. We did everything we could to follow the specifications”.

“That’s true”, said the president. “You followed all the specifications to the letter, except the one that had to do with our allowance costs. We were over our estimate by P385 000. How did that happen?”

“We really don’t know”, said the foremen and crew bosses. “The project manager never made that clear to us. He mentioned costs, but we thought that they were a home office problem, not ours. All the emphasis was on getting the job started and finished on time, and we did that. If costs were that important, the project manager should have said so!”

1. Explain three (3) ways in which the project manager’s communication failed.

(6)

2. Which instruction do you think should have been discussed between the project manager and the site foremen and crew bosses? Why?

(2)

3. Which two activities increased the cost of the project?

(2)

4. The project managers said the foremen and crew bosses should have known that there was to be no overtime and equipment costs had to be kept in line. To what extent do you agree with this? Give three reasons.

(6)

5. Were the foremen and crew bosses justified to say that if costs were an issue, the project manager should have said so? Give three reasons.

(6)

6. Should the site foremen and crew bosses also be blamed for the high cost of the project? Give two reasons.

(2)

7. What lesson do we learn from the case study?

(1)

## Question 2

### The Act of Running Meetings

Dry. Too intense. Unapproachable.

That's how colleagues described Thapelo, a manager in a biotech company responsible for leading meetings all day long. People left sessions discouraged and disgruntled. They complained that Thapelo was too heavy-handed to serve in management, and asked that he be transferred.

Kago studied Thapelo's performance during several meetings. He discovered many behaviour patterns that Thapelo could improve with practice. In the first meeting Thapelo's goal was to brainstorm a new product launch. The group was diverse, and included people from sales, marketing, R and D and engineering. Several attendees wanted to pursue multiple parallel paths to compare outcomes.

Thapelo disagreed. He thought deadlines were too tight to allow for several different plans. So he refused to listen to suggestions and pushed his own agenda forward. When the meeting was over, attendees grumbled that Thapelo was overbearing. They felt unheard.

One mistake Thapelo made was to confuse listening with agreeing. It never occurred to him that he could respectfully give airtime to concepts without personally endorsing

them. In other words, he had misunderstood the whole idea behind brainstorming, namely to allow people to consider many different ideas without judgment. Another problem Thapelo had was allowing tension to build in a group. As the leader, he neglected his responsibility to nurture cohesion and camaraderie.

Similarly Thapelo never gave strokes or positive remarks. He tended to make caustic comments like, 'You are not making any sense.' As a result participants felt put down and held back from making suggestions.

1. In your opinion, were the colleagues justified to describe Thapelo the way they did? Give two responses. (2)
2. Would transferring Thapelo help the organisation and Thapelo himself? (2)
3. Explain three things that Thapelo could do to improve the atmosphere during meetings. (6)
4. Why did meeting attendees feel unheard? Give two reasons. (4)
5. How did Thapelo perceive brainstorming? Give two responses. (4)
6. How would you feel if the chairperson of a meeting says that you are not making sense? Give two responses (4)
7. What made participants stop making suggestions during meetings? Give three reasons (3)

### QUESTION 3

#### Partnerships

One particular United States Company had a joint venture with a Japanese company. The agreement that the two companies signed stipulated that the Japanese company would supply the manufacturing, management and marketing components of the deal, while the American company would supply the technology.

The American representative, who was based in Hong Kong, met with their Japanese counterparts only once every three months where all aspects of the operation would be discussed.

In between these quarterly visits, the two parties exchanged communications through written correspondence and infrequent phone calls. To the Japanese, this periodic though infrequent contact signaled that the American partner was not overly committed to the relationship. Needless to say, the Japanese commitment to the partnership began to dwindle as well. As time progressed, the U.S. company's strategy altered as they began to concentrate on a smaller product line. The American company never bothered to advise their Japanese partner of the change in their strategy. Also due to this smaller line, there was the additional fiasco in that the Japanese company was not going to be receiving the technology it had negotiated with the American firm.

The Japanese took a dim view of what they now perceived as an agreement that was signed in "bad faith". The Japanese became bitter as the relationship soured and ended in arbitration. What was the result of the arbitration? The partnership was dissolved.

1. Identify three things that went wrong between the two companies. (6)
2. What two things were supposed to have been done by the American company? (4)
3. The Japanese company was also supposed to have done something. Suggest two things that the company could have done. (4)

4. During the negotiations the two companies did not discuss one important issue.  
Which one is it? (2)

5. The two companies made certain assumptions when they negotiated the deal.  
Identify one assumption that they made. (3)

6. If you were from the American company, what would you have done to make sure  
the deal did not collapse?  
(2)

7. What two lessons do we learn from the case study? (4)

END OF PAPER