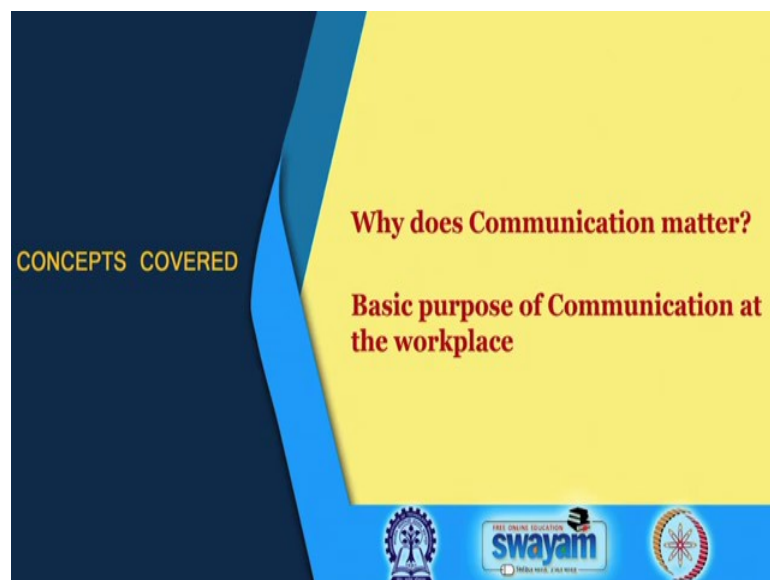


Employment Communication - A Lab Based Course
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Lecture – 03
Communication Skills at the Workplace

Hi friends. Welcome back to the course on Employment Communication, which is a lab based course. So, today we have a lecture number-3. And the topic of this lecture is Communication Skills at the Workplace.

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In the beginning, I would like to give you a view of the concepts, which we are going to cover in this lecture number-3. The first is why does communication matter; and the second, what are the basic purpose purposes of communication at the workplace. So, let us move on.

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The importance of Communication Skills as expressed by Business authorities

"Top executives from Fortune 500 companies rate communications skills as the most important quality for business leaders."
New York Times Business Section

"There may be no single thing more important in our efforts to achieve meaningful work and fulfilling relationships than to learn and practice the art of communication."
The Art of Leadership
Max De Pree, Author

Logos at the bottom include Swamyam (Free Online Education) and The Art of Leadership.

For a beginning, I would like to show you two of the quotations, which are the use of business authorities on the importance of communication, and communication skills at the workplace. We have first of all an extract from the business section of New York Times, which says that top executives from Fortune 500 companies rate communication skills as the most important quality for business leaders.

And secondly, we have the author of the art of leadership Max De Pree saying that “there may be no single thing more important in our efforts to achieve meaningful work and fulfilling relationships than to learn and practice the art of communication”. And there being nothing to explain, because these are self-explanatory. We move forward.

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Evidence of Communication weakness(es) at workplaces

“I’m surprised how so many people struggle with communication.”
- Michael Rook, Production Manager
Hewlett Packard, San Diego, CA

“The first thing the Human Resources Department did was give me a writing book.”
- Sam Reeves, IT Consultant
AMS, Denver, CO

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And we come to , again we have a two more quotations. And it is evidence of the fact that communication weakness, our communication weaknesses do matter at the workplace. The 1st one is by Michael Rook, production manager of Hewlett Packard in San Diego, California, US. And he says that “I am surprised how so many people struggle with communication”.

Then we have Sam Reeves, IT Consultant of AMS, Denver US. And he says that ‘the first thing the HRD that the Human Resources Department did was give me a writing book’. Writing being one of the very important of the four communication skills, we have mentioned them yesterday already listening, speaking, reading, and writing. So, let us move ahead.

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The role of Communication at the workplace

The importance of Communication Skills to you:

- Communication is important to business
- Business needs good communicators
- By improving your communication ability, you improve your chances for success.
- but most people do not communicate well

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Now, what is the importance of communication skills to you as an employee? And there are four, which I would like to mention the role of communication at the workplace. The 1st is that without communication no business, no work can happen. And the 2nd any workplace needs good communicators as any organization wants leaders.

And the 3rd is written there, by improving your communication ability, this is an advice. By improving our communication abilities, we improve your chances for success. And that is the main thing, which you are looking forward to in your workplace, that you achieve success day in day out throughout your career at the workplace. And the 4th point is a fact you know that most people do not communicate well, but again the idea of communication skills skills or abilities being that which we can work upon, which we can improve upon, which we can capture, which we can in fact make part of our own personality.

And therefore, this course employment skills, employment communication, which is a lab based course. And basically, we are working on the four communication skills listening, speaking, reading, writing, because these are the communication skills, which are required at the workplace. And these will give you success, and we move ahead.

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Why the need to communicate at the workplace

- Communication is vital to every part of business.
- Communication takes many forms: oral, written, and computer.
- All organized effort, including the work of business, requires communication.

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To, why the need? The question would be why they need to communicate at the workplace. Can we say that we do not need to communicate at the work place? No, we cannot say that, we can never say that in fact, so the need to communicate at the workplace arises because of three houses.

The 1st, the 1st reason is : communication is vital to every part of business, whether it is the start up or the entrepreneur, entrepreneurial efforts or a small unit or a big business house, whatever it is, any workplace survives on communication. And the 2nd is that communication skills at the workplace takes many forms; oral, written, and computer. Number three.

Lastly we have to note that any organized effort, because what happens in the workplace or at the business is an organization move moving in a strategic manner in a planned manner, so that all the efforts yield results. So, the last point here all organized effort, including whatever you are doing at the workplace, which is your business, your work, your lookout requires communication.

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Main forms of Communication at the workplace

There are three categories of Communication at the workplace:

- Operational
 - Internal
 - External
- Personal

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Now, what are the main forms of communication at the workplace? And we have actually two main forms. One is the operational level, and the 2nd is the personal or the subjective level. If you think about the operational level, operational level further can be divided into two parts: 1st being internal and the 2nd being external. So, in effect we have three categories of communication at the workplace operational, that is internal and external and personal.

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Main forms of Communication at the workplace (contd.)

- (1) Internal operational—the communicating done in conducting work within a business, such as giving orders, assembling reports, and writing email.
- (2) External operational—work related communication with people outside the business, such as personal selling, telephoning, advertising, and writing messages.
 - Messages display a company's etiquette.
 - Both internal and external communications are vital to business success.

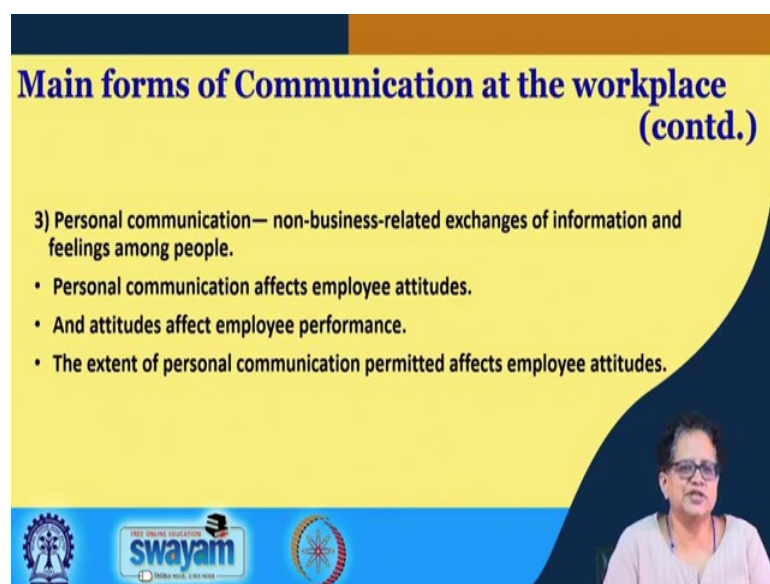
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Now, we go to the details of these aspects of communication at the workplace. The 1st form or the first aspect, let us say internal operational. This implies the communication done in conducting work within a business, for example giving orders, assembling the reports, and writing email - that is officially made.

And the 2nd is external operational. And this is whatever work you are doing, which is related to communication with people outside your business, such as you may be selling, you may be telephoning, you may be advertising or you may simply be writing a business message or an official communication. So, the point is that any kind of message or official write up you do or exercise in, displays your company's image. I use the term here is etiquette, etiquette that is the outlook the way in which your company is perceived by the rest of the world.

Another important point is that both internal and external communications are vital to business success. So, the workplace as a unit, the organisation as a unit must have a very good communication network, level, quality within the organization as well as external communication with the rest of the world or the rest of the organizations must be of very high impeccable standards, if this be so. If these two factors are taken into account, taken care of, then there is nothing which can stop the business or that organization from achieving success.

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**Main forms of Communication at the workplace
(contd.)**

3) Personal communication— non-business-related exchanges of information and feelings among people.

- Personal communication affects employee attitudes.
- And attitudes affect employee performance.
- The extent of personal communication permitted affects employee attitudes.

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Now, we come to a point number 3 or the 2nd, which is not the operational, but the personal level of communication at the workplace. And this is non-business related exchanges of information and feelings among people. You know at the workplace, after working for quite some time maybe 1, 2, 3, 4 years, we become like a family you know. And we have the feeling that a senior employee is as if the elder brother or the elder sister or somebody who is in a position to influence as well as guide us, and persuade us, if need be.

So, personal communication in fact, affects the employee attitudes. If we think about this styles of communication, there are three styles of communication generally that is assertive, aggressive, and noble. Then the idea is that our communication styles will be, in fact reflected by our attitudes. Our attitudes depends on personal feelings, and personal feelings depend in turn on personal communication, we have with each other at the workplace.

So, attitudes affect our performance at the workplace, and most important to remember here is also, the point that the extent of personal communication permitted within the organization affects employee attitudes. Now, there is a difference, which I need to mention here the difference of the workplace culture in the west. In fact, let us say US and other countries in the western part of the world not much of personal communication is in fact appreciated or allowed, but in the east in our side of the world, let us say India, Asia, Asian countries so on and so forth, Southeast Asia, we are more on the feeling level on the personal communication level, it is more open , more allowed.

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The slide features a yellow background with a dark blue curved shape on the right side. At the top, the title "Communication networks at the workplace" is written in bold blue font. Below the title, there are two main bullet points: "Formal Network" and "Informal Network". Under "Formal Network", there are two sub-bullets: "well-established, usually along operational lines" and "planned". Under "Informal Network", there are two sub-bullets: "complex" and "dynamic". At the bottom of the slide, there is a blue banner with logos for "swayam" and other educational institutions. A small video feed of a woman with glasses is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Now, coming to how the communication network is in fact arranged in the workplace. There are two types of networks at the workplace. The 1st the formal and the 2nd the informal; the formal network is the way in which you communicate or the network of communication, which is hierarchy bound, role-bound personally oriented. And it is between you, and your superior, between you, and your subordinates. What we have to say here is that it is well established, and it is usually along operational lines. For example, if you have to operate or work with x, y, z who are senior to you, you may not be communicating with a, b, c, who are no were related in that operation or in that work operation. And the second point of formal network of communication at the workplace is that it is planned.

Number-2, the second type of communication network at the workplace is the informal network. Informal network is more complex and dynamic. Informal network as you understand by the name itself, it is not the formal network. And it is that between the colleagues, who are now on the level of friends, they are now on the level of friends and partners and maybe best friends also. So, this is more complex and dynamic as you understand.

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Factors affecting volume of Communication at the workplace

- Nature of the business
- Operating plan
- People

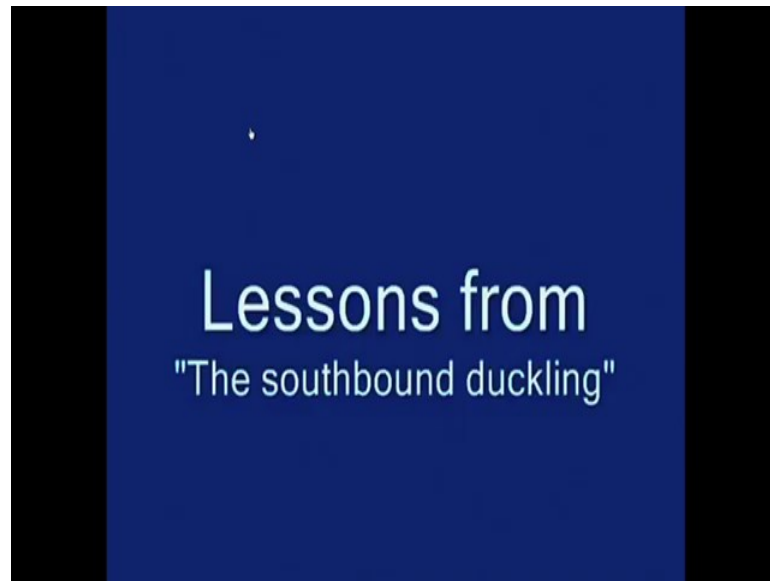
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Now, what are the factors, which would affect the volume, I mean the amount of communication at the workplace, when you are finally at the workplace. What are the issues, what are the factors, which affect the volume of communication at the workplace? And we have three as an answer.

The 1st is the nature of the business. If the workplace or the office, where you are working is of the quality or the level or we use the term here nature, which requires lot of communication then so be it. Number-2 is operation plan. If it is a very complicated or a very large structure and a complicated work has to be done, then there are many levels as well as sub-levels of communication, because a huge product or a huge action plan is to be achieved by the workers or the employees of the organization.

And the third is, the third factor, which affects the volume of communication at the workplaces, how many people and the quality of people and the role and functional responsibilities of the people, who are at the workplace. So, there are these three factors, I repeat, nature of the business, number-2 operating plan, number-3 people, which in fact decides or which in fact is responsible for the amount of communication taking place at the workplace.

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Now, I just wanted to show you a short video in this collection.

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(Refer Time: 16:06).

(Refer Slide Time: 16:11)



(Refer Slide Time: 16:13)



Hey, wait for me, wait for me.

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Wild ducks are migratory birds and fly south every winter.

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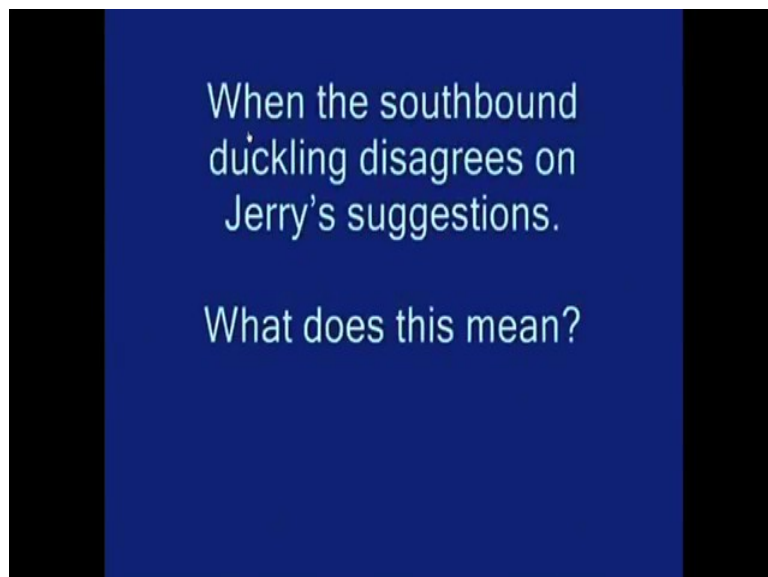
Domestic ducks are primarily farm fowl, and do not fly south for the winter.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:38) I'm going, I'm going south

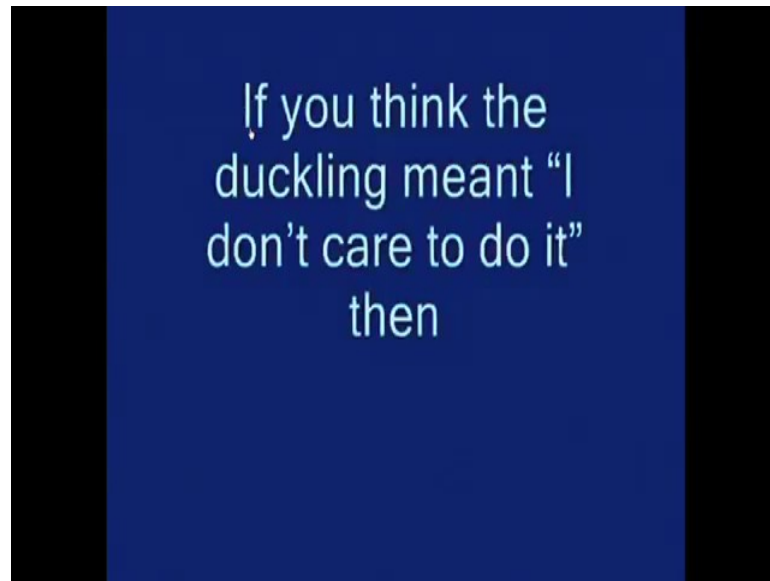


(Refer Time: 16:40) bye-bye. Farm fowl do not fly south for the winter; I'm going south
(Refer Time: 17:28). (Refer Time: 17:41) Jerry, I will see you in next time.(Refer Time:
17:52).

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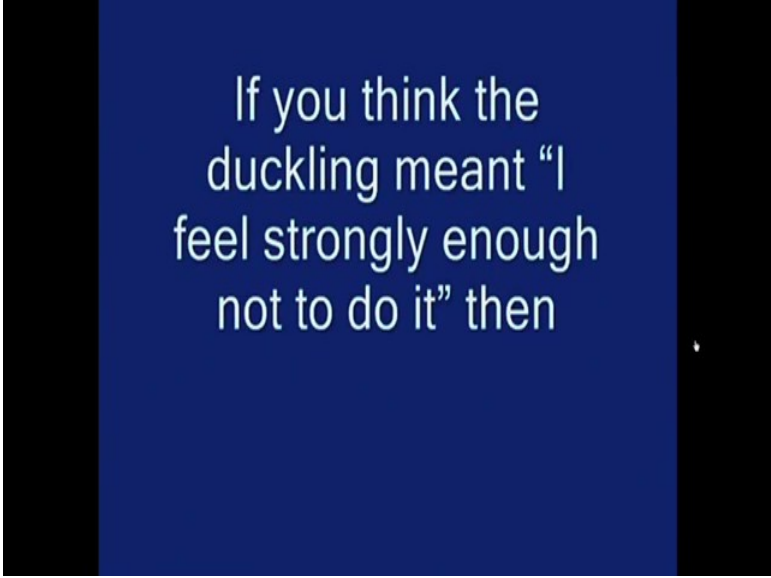
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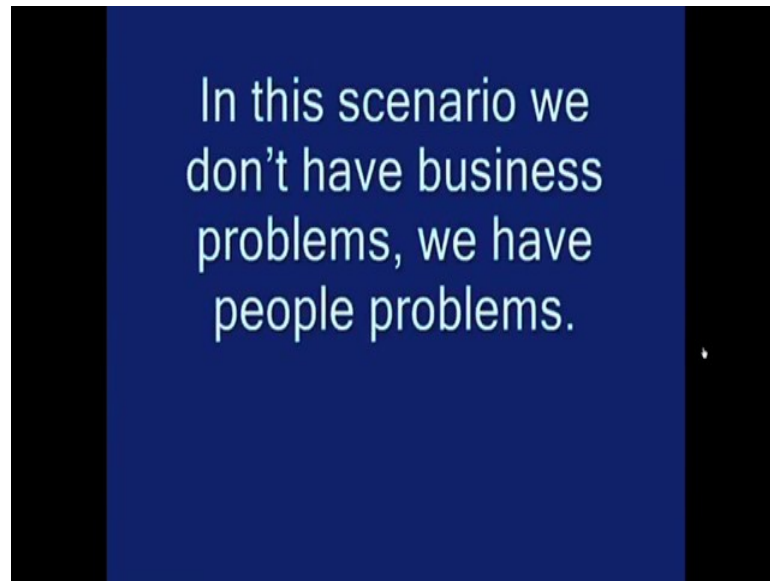
If you think the
duckling meant “I
feel strongly enough
not to do it” then

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that’s a values
issue!

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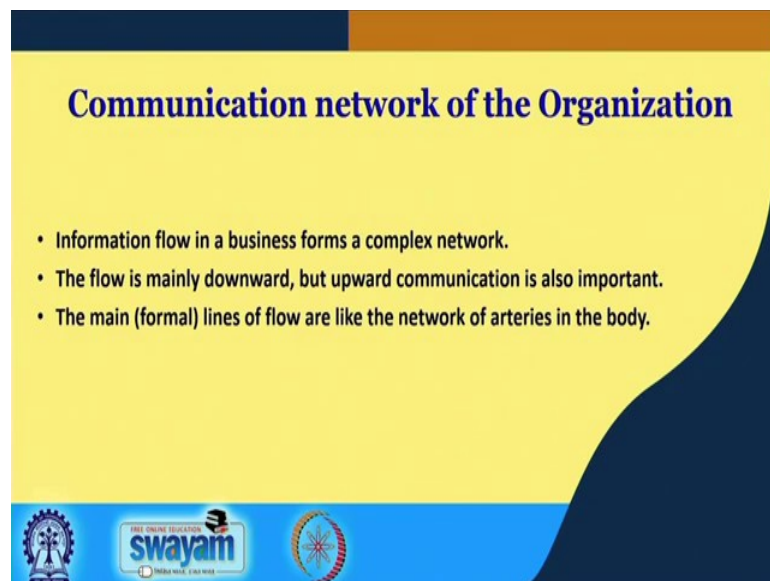
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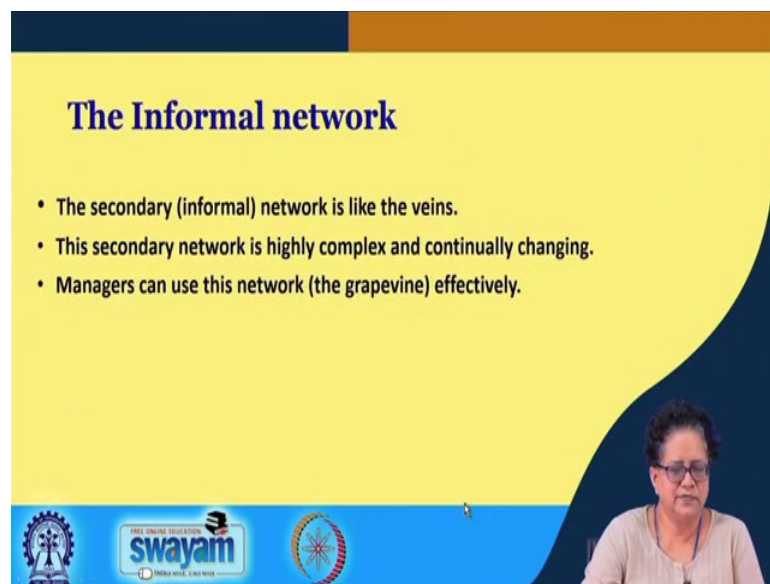
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So, we are going to talk about the communication network at the workplace in an organization. Say for example, and this is the way in which information flows in the business or the workplace. Actually it is a complex network, it is not a simple system as such, think about the company, which is having headquarter in let us say Chennai, but has many offshore locations as well. And think on the other hand about a small company, which is a start-up, and is located at let us say Kolkata and has no other branches.

And think about a company; let us say for example Uber, which has worldwide presence wherever the Uber taxi services are running. So, information flow in a business forms a complex network and it depends on the factors we have already mentioned. Generally, because the authority the top boss, the owners of the company are concerned or they are going to manage the objectives of the company, the products of the company, the annual turnover of the company therefore, the flow of information in a workplace is from top to bottom, because from top comes the instructions to work on the objectives , to obtain the results for the company as such, but the upward communication is also important. Because, the men or women who occupied the upper echelons of the company need to know what the real workers or the real men who matter at the bottom think about work out, and how they operate, what are the needs and situations in reality? Now, we have an analogy for you that the main that is the formal top to bottom flow of information can be compared to the arteries of the human system.

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The Informal network

- The secondary (informal) network is like the veins.
- This secondary network is highly complex and continually changing.
- Managers can use this network (the grapevine) effectively.

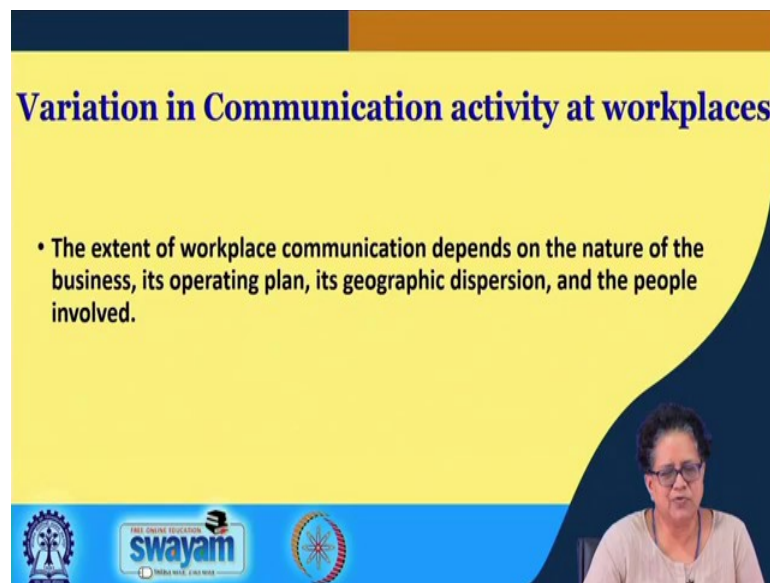
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And, on the other hand, the secondary or the informal network, which is day-to-day chit chat, talk the communication of pleasantries and other non-formal communication is like the veins of the human body. And this secondary network, which is the informal network is equally complex and dynamic as we say continually changing.

And you know at the workplace what matters quite much is the grapevine by which we mean rumours and gossip. In any workplace, whether it is the west or the eastern part of

the world gossip and rumour is highly contagious and happening throughout the work time. And actually, the manager is the one, who can effectively use grapevine to communicate important information at that level, where it would matter to even turn the fortunes of the company.

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Variation in Communication activity at workplaces

- The extent of workplace communication depends on the nature of the business, its operating plan, its geographic dispersion, and the people involved.

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So, let us come now to the variation in communication activity at workplaces, how it is how it does happen that communication activity is different at different workplaces. Now, we have started and we have given you that example of three companies big company, a media occur sized company, and the small unit that is simply an entrepreneurial effort or a start-up located in one city let us say Kolkata.

So, one was Uber, one was a headquartered at Chennai with several offshore locations. And the last one was a start-up in Kolkata. So, the extent of workplace communication depends on the nature of the business, what is the company doing, how is the operating plan, number-3 geographic dispersion that is offshore, and off country or off-locale locales. And the 3rd is how many people are involved in that business or organization.

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How Oral and Written Communication differ

Written communication differs from oral communication in that it:

- (1) is more likely to involve creative effort,
- (2) has longer cycles, and
- (3) usually has fewer cycles.

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Now, we come to an important topic of what is the difference between the two forms of communication at the workplace, among the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing. Speaking or spoken communication, and writing on written communication will occupy most of their work time at the office or workplace.

Now, there is a difference between both oral and written communication. And this can be summarized in three ways. The 1st is that written communication involves creativity. You see speaking is a onetime activity. Two people are talking formally at the workplace, and they exchange in many dialogues or conversations over a period of time. It happens naturally, spontaneously in response to a question and answer discussion thread, where discussion so on and so forth.

Whereas, if you are given to do a piece of written work, for example if you are given the task of writing a project report, then you have to and you will be in fact employing your creativity, which is not there in spoken communication; unless you are reciting a impromptu poem, which you have self-composed, instantaneously, because you are creative.

Number-2 is written communication has longer cycles. As I said speaking is a onetime activity. Once the people have a meeting, they meet discuss, the minutes are drawn, the minutes are circulated that is all. But, if you think about writing a report, sending the first draft, getting some review comments from the boss or the manager, again rewriting it

draft two, so there are longer cycles in written communication on the formal level at the workplace.

But, on the other hand there can also be fewer cycles. There is in fact a no end to the amount of speaking; you can do to achieve the exact correct level of meaning to be drawn by the other. But, if you think about written communication, after certain drafts, after 2, 3, 4 drafts perhaps the meaning is clear, and therefore fewer cycles in written communication as compared to oral communication.

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Some basic truths about Communication

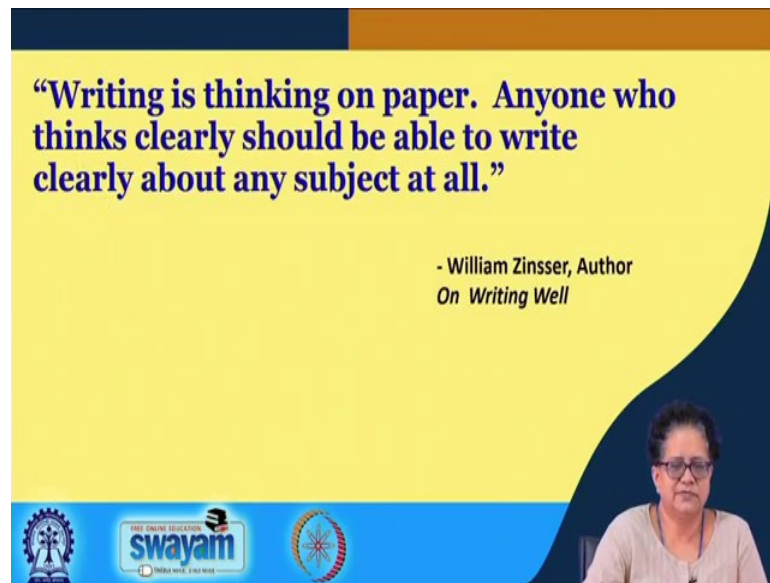
- The communication process reveals some basic truths.
- Meanings sent are not always received: Because our mental filters differ, meanings sent may differ from meanings received.
- Meaning is in the mind: Meanings are in the mind—not in symbols.
- The symbols of Communication are imperfect: Because symbols are imperfect and people differ in their ability to communicate, communication is far from perfect.
- Communication across cultures is especially difficult.
- Even so, we communicate reasonably well.

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Let us come to some basic truths about communication, towards the end of this class or this lecture. The 1st is that meanings that are sent are not always received in toto exactly as they were intended to be sent or transmitted. This is because each one of us has within us filters, mental filters by which we view the world; we have our own specific set of unique characteristics and attitudes. And our own notions, over and above the general idea of things places events situations. So because our mental filters differ, therefore meanings sent by the communicator will differ from the meaning received by communicatee.

And remember also number-2 that meaning is only in the mind. As we have said in the triangle of meaning by Richards and Ogden. The point is that meanings are only in the thought, not in the words or the symbol as such. The symbols of communication are imperfect point number-3, because symbols are imperfect. And people differ in their

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“Writing is thinking on paper. Anyone who thinks clearly should be able to write clearly about any subject at all.”

- William Zinsser, Author
On Writing Well

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Then we think about the workplace, where of course you are speaking, but remember that anything written is now a matter of record. And therefore, what you think must be well thought out. We have here a quote by William Zinsser, who is the author of “On Writing Well”. And he says that writing is thinking on paper. Speaking is reading in actuality, writing is thinking on paper. So, he says further anyone who thinks clearly should be able to write clearly about any subject on all or of anything anything as such. So, the emphasis is on improving your clarity, and fine tuning your thinking process.

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Summary by Lecture objectives

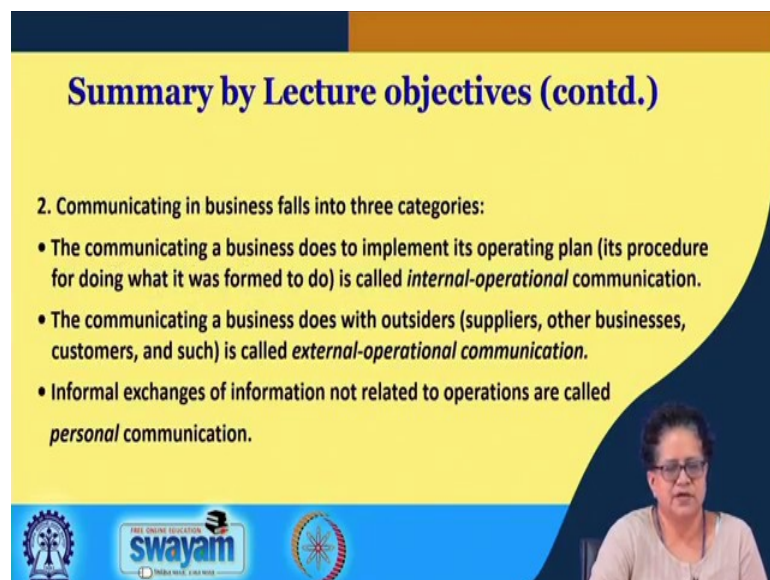
1. Business needs and rewards people who can communicate, for communication is vital to business operations.
 - But good communicators are scarce.
 - So, if you can improve your communication skills, you increase your value to business and business will reward you.

The slide features a yellow background with a dark blue curved shape on the right side. At the bottom, there is a blue banner with logos for 'swayam' and 'INDIA WISE, LEARN WISE'. A small video inset in the bottom right corner shows a woman with glasses speaking.

Let us summarize the lecture by objectives, of the lecture set forth at the initial introduction to the course. First is that any workplace, any business will lead and reward people, who can communicate well for communication is most important to business operations and business success.

But, the point is that good communicators are scarce to come by, they are difficult to come by. So, the final submission understanding is that if you are good in communication skills, if you can improve work upon your communication skills, you can have more value in your business, and you will be suitably rewarded at the workplace.

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Summary by Lecture objectives (contd.)

2. Communicating in business falls into three categories:

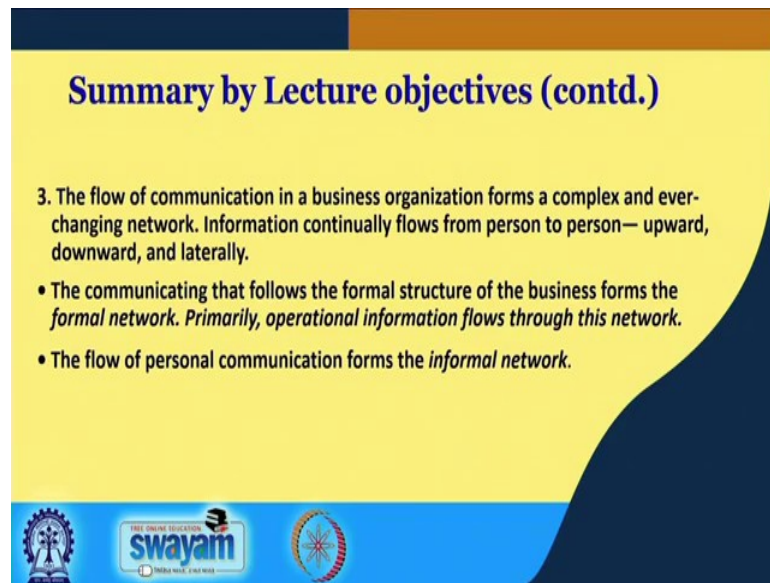
- The communicating a business does to implement its operating plan (its procedure for doing what it was formed to do) is called *internal-operational communication*.
- The communicating a business does with outsiders (suppliers, other businesses, customers, and such) is called *external-operational communication*.
- Informal exchanges of information not related to operations are called *personal communication*.

The slide also features logos for the University of Kerala, Swayam, and the Ministry of Education, Government of India, along with a small video inset of a woman speaking.

Number-2 communication at the workplace falls into three categories. The 1st is the internal operational communication, which is the communication a business does to implement, it is operating plan. For example, writing reports, sending summaries, composing project proposals, making inventories, so on and so forth.

The second is the external operational communication that is the communication, a business does with outsiders. They may be people like suppliers, other companies customers, clients and such. And this is the example, where we talk about business messages. And the 3rd is the informal exchange of information, which is not related to operations. And this is called personal communication, which is not related to the formal workplace communication.

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Summary by Lecture objectives (contd.)

3. The flow of communication in a business organization forms a complex and ever-changing network. Information continually flows from person to person— upward, downward, and laterally.

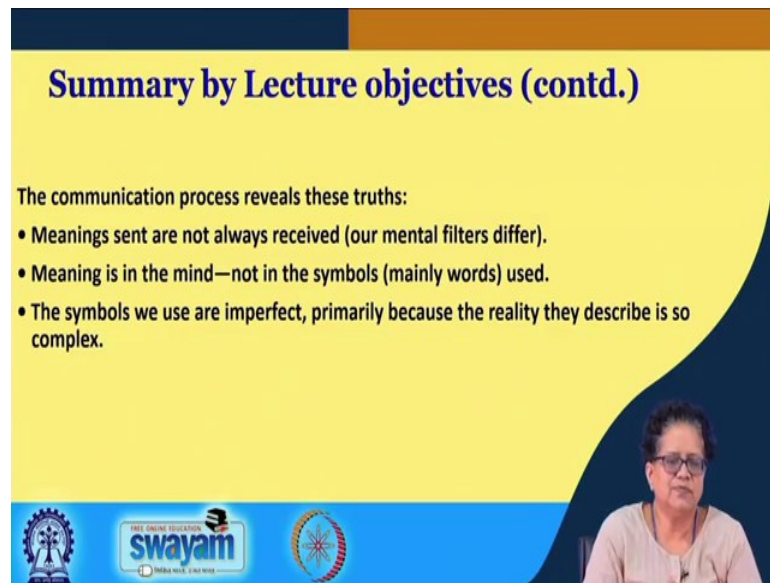
- The communicating that follows the formal structure of the business forms the *formal network*. *Primarily, operational information flows through this network.*
- The flow of personal communication forms the *informal network*.

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Now, let us come to summary. The third point in the summary of this lecture. The flow of communication in a business organization forms a complex and ever changing network. Information continually flows from person to person-upward, downward, and laterally. So, we are imagining a workplace, where you will be working in future a place, where there would be information flowing from your superior your boss and between you and also to those, who work with you, your subordinates.

And the next point is that the most important formal communication at the workplace is the operational information flow, and that is always formal. The informal communication therefore forms the informal network, it is the personal communication you indulge in at the workplace, exchanging pleasantries, saying hi, bye, good day, good morning so on and so forth, how are you, how is your family going on, how is your dog doing, what is the vacation plan so on and so forth.

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Summary by Lecture objectives (contd.)

The communication process reveals these truths:

- Meanings sent are not always received (our mental filters differ).
- Meaning is in the mind—not in the symbols (mainly words) used.
- The symbols we use are imperfect, primarily because the reality they describe is so complex.

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So, the next point is that the communication process reveals some basic truths. First that meaning sent are not always received, because our mental filters are different. Number-2 your meaning is in your mind, and not in the symbols or words, which you use. And thirdly, the symbols or words we use are imperfect, because the reality, they describe is complex. And mostly, especially for speakers, who do not have English as the native tongue, it is the question of finding the right word, and not finding it, and using the wrong word. And therefore, the symbols we use are imperfect, because we are not able to capture the reality quickly, right symbols or the right words.

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References

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3. Effective Business Communication – Asha Kaul, PHI: 2005
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These are the key references I have used for the preparation of the lecture. And this is the end of the topic on communication skills at the workplace.

Thank you. And, may God bless you.